



U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION  
1225 New York Ave. NW - Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20005

TALLY VOTE MATTER

DATE & TIME OF TRANSMITTAL: March 29, 2007, 12:30p.m.

BALLOT DEADLINE: April 02, 2007, 12:30p.m.

COMMISSIONERS: DAVIDSON, HILLMAN, HUNTER AND RODRIGUEZ

SUBJECT: DRAFT VOTER IDENTIFICATION REPORT, RESEARCH AND  
FUTURE STUDY OF VOTER IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- ☒ I approve the recommendation.  
☐ I disapprove the recommendation.  
☐ I object to the recommendation.  
☐ I am recused from voting.

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

DATE: 3/29/07 SIGNATURE: *Glenn*  
for Chair Donetta Davidson

A definite vote is required. All ballots must be signed and dated. Please return  
ONLY THE BALLOT to the EAC Chairman. Please return the ballot no later than  
date and time shown above.

FROM THOMAS WILKEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

007063



U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION  
1225 New York Ave. NW - Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20005

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I approve the recommendation.

( )

I disapprove the recommendation.

( )

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( )

I am recused from voting.

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

DATE: 3/29/07

SIGNATURE: Carol C. Hunt

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FROM THOMAS WILKEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

007064



U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION  
1225 New York Ave. NW - Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20005

**TALLY VOTE MATTER**

**DATE & TIME OF TRANSMITTAL:** March 26, 2007, 1:00p.m.

**BALLOT DEADLINE:** March 28, 2007, 1:00p.m.

**COMMISSIONERS:** DAVIDSON, HILLMAN, HUNTER AND RODRIGUEZ

**SUBJECT:** DRAFT VOTER IDENTIFICATION REPORT, RESEARCH AND  
FUTURE STUDY OF VOTER IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- ( ) I approve the recommendation.
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- ( ) I object to the recommendation.
- ( ) I am recused from voting.

**COMMENTS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

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FROM THOMAS WILKEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

007065



U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION  
1225 New York Ave. NW - Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20005

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Commissioners Davidson, Hillman, Hunter, and Rodriguez

FROM: Thomas R. Wilkey *TRW*  
Executive Director

DATE: March 26, 2007

RE: Draft Voter Identification Report, Research and Future Study of Voter Identification Requirements

## BACKGROUND

In 2005, EAC contracted with the Eagleton Institute of Politics to conduct a study of the voter identification requirements that were in existence in the 50 states and 5 territories during the 2004 election. As a part of that study, Eagleton conducted research concerning the status of laws in the states and also conducted statistical analysis regarding the impact of the existence of voter identification requirements on the turnout of voters.

The Contractor's summary of States' voter identification requirements and its summary of state laws, statutes, regulations and litigation surrounding the implementation of voter identification requirements are a first step in the Commission's efforts to study the possible impact of voter identification requirements. However, the data, analysis, and statistical methodology the Contractor used to analyze voter identification requirements raise concerns. The Contractor used a single election's statistics to conduct this analysis. The two sets of data came from the Census Bureau and included persons who were not eligible to and did not vote. The first analysis using averaged county-level turnout data from the U.S. Census showed no statistically significant correlations. So, a second analysis using a data set based upon the Current Population Survey (which was self-reported and showed a significantly higher turnout rate than other conventional data) was conducted that produced only some evidence of correlation between voter identification requirements and turnout. Furthermore, the initial categorization of voter identification requirements included classifications that actually require no identification at all, such as "state your name." The research methodology and the statistical analysis used by the Contractor were questioned by independent working and peer review groups comprised of social scientists and statisticians.

## ANALYSIS

As you may know, the Deliberative Process Privilege to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) protects intra-agency documents that are (1) pre-decisional in nature and (2) part of the deliberative process. In other words, the documents must be part of a process that recommends or presents opinions on a policy matter or governmental decision before that matter is finally decided. It is a well settled matter of law that the work of contract employees and contractors ("consultants") constitute intra-agency documents.<sup>1</sup> This is true even where the consultants are deemed to be independent contractors and are not subject to the degree of control that agency employment entails.<sup>2</sup> The courts have made this determination after recognizing that agencies have a special need for the opinions and recommendations of temporary consultants.<sup>3</sup> Ultimately, deliberative documents are exempt from release (1) to encourage open and frank discussions on policy matters between agency subordinates and superiors, (2) to protect against premature disclosure of proposed policies and (3) to protect against public confusion that might result from disclosure of rationales that were not in fact the ultimate basis for agency action.<sup>4</sup>

The draft report presented by Eagleton represents one phase of the deliberative process—before the document was vetted by staff, approved by the Executive Director and reviewed and approved by the Commissioners (the relevant policy makers). Ultimately, the draft document was created by Eagleton in order to aid the EAC's Commissioners in their decisions regarding voter identification requirements. The contractor had no personal interest in their submissions and had no agency decision-making authority. Eagleton was tasked with simply providing pre-decisional research and information to the EAC. Their efforts were limited to creating a truthful, comprehensive, and unbiased draft report. Only when a report is finalized and is adopted by EAC does it constitute an EAC decision or a policy determination.

The Voter Identification draft report was created by Eagleton in conjunction with the Moritz College of Law (Ohio State University) to "...provide research assistance to the EAC for the development of voluntary guidance on provisional voting and voter identification procedures." The stated objective of the contract was to:

...obtain assistance with the collection, analysis and interpretation of information regarding HAVA provisional voting and voter identification requirements for the purpose of drafting guidance on these topics... The anticipated outcome of this activity is the generation of concrete policy recommendations to be issued as voluntary guidance for States.

Eagleton was provided guidance, information, and were directed by EAC personnel. The final product that they were to deliver (draft report) was identified in the contract as "a guidance document for EAC adoption." Clearly, as noted by the contract, the issuance of Federal guidance to states is a matter of government policy and limited to official EAC action.

---

<sup>1</sup> Department of the Interior v. Klamath Water Users Protective Association, 532 U.S. 1, 9-11 (2001) (Citing Harry E. Hoover v. Dept. of the Interior, 611 F.2d 1132, at 1138 (1980); Lead Industries Assn. v. OSHA, 610 F.2d 70, 83 (C.A.5 1980) (applying exemption 5 to draft reports prepared by contractors); and Government Land Bank v. GSA, 671 F.2d 663, 665 (CA1 1982)); See also Hertzberg v. Veneman, 273 F. Supp. 2d 67, 76 n.2 (D.D.C. 2003).

<sup>2</sup> Klamath, at 10.

<sup>3</sup> Hoover, 611 F.2d at 1138.

<sup>4</sup> NLRB v. Sears, Roebuck & Co., 41 U.S. at 151.

EAC's interpretation of HAVA and its determination of what it will study and how it will use its resources to study it are matters of agency policy and decision. It would be irresponsible for EAC to accept the product of contracted employees and publish that information without exercising due diligence in vetting the product of the employees' work and the veracity of the information used to produce that product. EAC, along with working and peer review groups have conducted this review of the draft voter identification report provided by Eagleton. EAC found that the draft report raised more questions than it answered, because of the limited data that was analyzed and the analysis that was conducted on those data.

As a part of its review of the draft report, EAC staff have determined that the contractor's summary of States' voter identification requirements and its summary of state laws, statutes, regulations and litigation surrounding the implementation of voter identification requirements are a first step in the Commission's efforts to study the possible impact of voter identification requirements. In addition, staff recommends a series of next steps for future study and analysis of voter identification requirements, including:

- Conduct an ongoing state-by-state review, reporting and tracking of voter identification requirements. This will include tracking states' requirements which require a voter to state this or her name, to sign his or her name, to match his or her signature to a signature on file, to provide photo or non-photo identification or to swear an affidavit affirming his or her identity.
- Establish a baseline of information that will include factors that may affect or influence Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) voter participation, including various voter identification requirements, the competitiveness of a race and certain environmental or political factors. EAC will use some of the information collected by Eagleton as well as additional data from the states to develop this baseline.
- In 2007, convene a working group of advocates, academics, research methodologists and election officials to discuss EAC's next study of voter identification. Topics to be discussed include methodology, specific issues to be covered in the study and timelines for completing an EAC study on voter identification.
- Study how voter identification provisions that have been in place for two or more Federal elections have impacted voter turnout, voter registration figures, and fraud. Included in this study will be an examination of the relationship between voter turnout and other factors such as race and gender. Study the effects of voter identification provisions, or the lack thereof, on early, absentee and vote-by-mail voting.
- Publish a series of best practice case studies which detail a particular state's or jurisdiction's experiences with educating poll workers and voters about various voter identification requirements. Included in the case studies will be detail on the policies and practices used to educate and inform poll workers and voters.

A draft statement capturing proposed action on the draft report as well as recommended next steps for research and analysis of voter identification requirements has been attached to this memorandum.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- (1) EAC should exercise its authority in making policy concerning the study of voter identification requirements and decline to adopt the draft report provided by Eagleton;
- (2) EAC should adopt the recommendations of staff regarding future study and analysis of voter identification requirements;
- (3) EAC should adopt and publish the attached statement concerning the research and draft report presented by Eagleton as well as the future plans of EAC to conduct research in this area; and
- (4) EAC should publish the data, information and draft report provided by Eagleton.

# **EAC Study of Voter Identification Requirements**

## **Background**

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) authorizes the United States Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to conduct periodic studies of election administration issues. In May 2005, EAC contracted with Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey through its Eagleton Institute of Politics ("Contractor") to perform a review and legal analysis of state legislation, administrative procedures and court cases, and to perform a literature review on other research and data available on the topic of voter identification requirements. Further, the Contractor was asked to analyze the problems and challenges of voter identification, to hypothesize alternative approaches and to recommend various policies that could be applied to these approaches.

The Contractor performed a statistical analysis of the relationship of various requirements for voter identification to voter turnout in the 2004 election. Drawing on its nationwide review and legal analysis of state statutes and regulations for voter identification, the contractor compared states with similar voter identification requirements and drew conclusions based on comparing turnout rates among states for one election – November 2004. For example, the turnout rate in 2004 in states that required the voter to provide a photo identification document<sup>1</sup> was compared to the turnout rate in 2004 in states with a requirement that voters give his or her name in order to receive a ballot. Contractor used two sets of data to estimate turnout rates: 1) voting age population estimates<sup>2</sup> and 2) individual-level survey data from the November 2004 Current Population Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau.<sup>3</sup>

The Contractor presented testimony summarizing its findings from this statistical and data analysis at the February 8, 2007 public meeting of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission. The Contractor's testimony, its summary of voter identification requirements by State, its summary of court decisions and literature on voter identification and related issues, an annotated bibliography on voter identification issues and its summary of state statutes and regulations affecting voter identification are attached to this report and can also be found on EAC's website, [www.eac.gov](http://www.eac.gov).

## **EAC Declines to Adopt Draft Report**

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<sup>1</sup> In 2004, three of the states that authorized election officials to request photo identification allowed voters to provide a non-photo ID and still vote a regular ballot and two others permitted voters who lacked photo ID to vote a regular ballot by swearing and affidavit.

<sup>2</sup> The July 2004 estimates for voting age population were provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. These data did not differentiate between citizens and non-citizens; because these numbers include non-citizens, the Contractor applied the percentage of citizens included in voting age population statistics in 2000 to the U.S. Census Bureau estimated voting age population in 2004. Thus, 2004 estimates of voting age population include persons who are not registered to vote.

<sup>3</sup> The Current Population Survey is based on reports from self-described registered voters who also describe themselves as U.S. citizens.

EAC finds the Contractor's summary of States' voter identification requirements and its summary of state laws, statutes, regulations and litigation surrounding the implementation of voter identification requirements, to be a first step in the Commission's efforts to study the possible impact of voter identification requirements.

However, EAC has concerns regarding the data, analysis, and statistical methodology the Contractor used to analyze voter identification requirements to determine if these laws have an impact on turnout rates. The Contractor used a single election's statistics to conduct this analysis. The two sets of data came from the Census Bureau and included persons who were not eligible to and did not vote. The first analysis using averaged county-level turnout data from the U.S. Census showed no statistically significant correlations. So, a second analysis using a data set based upon the Current Population Survey (which was self-reported and showed a significantly higher turnout rate than other conventional data) was conducted that produced only some evidence of correlation between voter identification requirements and turnout. Furthermore, the initial categorization of voter identification requirements included classifications that actually require no identification at all, such as "state your name." The research methodology and the statistical analysis used by the Contractor were questioned by independent working and peer review groups comprised of social scientists and statisticians. The Contractor and the EAC agree that the report raises more questions than provides answers.<sup>4</sup> Thus, EAC will not adopt the Contractor's study and will not issue an EAC report based upon this study. All of the material provided by the Contractor is attached.

#### **Further EAC Study on Voter Identification Requirements**

EAC will engage in a longer-term, more systematic review of voter identification requirements. Additional study on the topic will include more than one Federal election cycle, additional environmental and political factors that effect voter participation, and the numerous changes in state laws and regulations related to voter identification requirements that have occurred since 2004.

EAC will undertake the following activities:

- Conduct an ongoing state-by-state review, reporting and tracking of voter identification requirements. This will include tracking states' requirements which require a voter to state this or her name, to sign his or her name, to match his or her signature to a signature on file, to provide photo or non-photo identification or to swear an affidavit affirming his or her identify.
- Establish a baseline of information that will include factors that may affect or influence Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) voter participation, including various voter identification requirements, the competitiveness of a race and certain environmental or political factors. EAC will use some of the information collected by Eagleton as well as additional data from the states to develop this baseline.

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<sup>4</sup> See Transcript of EAC Public Meeting, February 8, 2007, page 109.

- In 2007, convene a working group of advocates, academics, research methodologists and election officials to discuss EAC's next study of voter identification. Topics to be discussed include methodology, specific issues to be covered in the study and timelines for completing an EAC study on voter identification.
- Study how voter identification provisions that have been in place for two or more Federal elections have impacted voter turnout, voter registration figures, and fraud. Included in this study will be an examination of the relationship between voter turnout and other factors such as race and gender. Study the effects of voter identification provisions, or the lack thereof, on early, absentee and vote-by-mail voting.
- Publish a series of best practice case studies which detail a particular state's or jurisdiction's experiences with educating poll workers and voters about various voter identification requirements. Included in the case studies will be detail on the policies and practices used to educate and inform poll workers and voters.

007072



U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION  
1225 New York Ave. NW - Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20005

**TALLY VOTE MATTER**

DATE & TIME OF TRANSMITTAL: March 28, 2007, 3:00p.m.

BALLOT DEADLINE: March 30, 2007, 3:00p.m.

COMMISSIONERS: DAVIDSON, HILLMAN, HUNTER AND RODRIGUEZ

SUBJECT: DRAFT VOTER IDENTIFICATION REPORT, RESEARCH AND  
FUTURE STUDY OF VOTER IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

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COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

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FROM THOMAS WILKEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR


007073



**U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION**  
**1225 New York Ave. NW - Suite 1100**  
**Washington, DC 20005**

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Commissioners Davidson, Hillman, Hunter, and Rodriguez

FROM:  Thomas R. Wilkey  
Executive Director

DATE: March 28, 2007

RE: Draft Voter Identification Report, Research and Future Study of Voter Identification Requirements

**BACKGROUND**

In 2005, EAC contracted with the Eagleton Institute of Politics to conduct a study of the voter identification requirements that were in existence in the 50 states and 5 territories during the 2004 election. As a part of that study, Eagleton conducted research concerning the status of laws in the states and also conducted statistical analysis regarding the impact of the existence of voter identification requirements on the turnout of voters.

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**ANALYSIS**

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- In 2007, convene a working group of advocates, academics, research methodologists and election officials to discuss EAC's next study of voter identification. Topics to be discussed include methodology, specific issues to be covered in the study and timelines for completing an EAC study on voter identification.
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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- (1) EAC should exercise its authority in making policy concerning the study of voter identification requirements and decline to adopt the draft report provided by Eagleton;
- (2) EAC should adopt the recommendations of staff regarding future study and analysis of voter identification requirements;
- (3) EAC should adopt and publish the attached statement concerning the research and draft report presented by Eagleton as well as the future plans of EAC to conduct research in this area; and
- (4) EAC should publish the data, information and draft report provided by Eagleton.



U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION  
1225 New York Ave. NW - Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20005

May 12, 2006

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** EAC Commissioners

**FROM:** Peggy Sims, Election Research Specialist *PS*

**SUBJECT:** Voting Fraud-Voter Intimidation Working Group Meeting

The first meeting of the Voting Fraud-Voter Intimidation Working Group will take place from 1:00 PM to 5:30 PM on Thursday, May 18th, 2006 at the offices of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC), 1225 New York Avenue, NW, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor, Washington, DC.

As you know, Section 241 of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) requires EAC to conduct research on election administration issues. Among the tasks listed in the statute is the development of:

- nationwide statistics and methods of identifying, deterring, and investigating voting fraud in elections for Federal office [section 241(b)(6)]; and
- ways of identifying, deterring, and investigating methods of voter intimidation [section 241(b)(7)].

EAC's Board of Advisors recommended that the agency make research on these matters a high priority. Consequently, in September 2005, EAC contracted with two consultants (Job Serebrov and Tova Wang) to:

- develop a comprehensive description of what constitutes voting fraud and voter intimidation in the context of Federal elections;
- perform background research (including Federal and State administrative and case law review), identify current activities of key government agencies, civic and advocacy organizations regarding these topics, and deliver a summary of this research and all source documentation;

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- establish a project working group, in consultation with EAC, composed of key individuals and representatives of organizations knowledgeable about the topics of voting fraud and voter intimidation;
- provide the description of what constitutes voting fraud and voter intimidation and the results of the preliminary research to the working group, and convene the working group to discuss potential avenues for future EAC research on this topic; and
- produce a report to EAC summarizing the findings of the preliminary research effort and working group deliberations that includes recommendations for future research, if any;

For your information, the folder accompanying this letter includes a number of items related to our consultants' preliminary research and the upcoming meeting:

- a meeting agenda;
- a list of Working Group members;
- a draft definition of election fraud;
- a list of reports and literature reviewed;
- a summary of interviews conducted and a list of experts interviewed;
- a list of experts interviewed;
- an analysis of news articles researched through Nexis;
- a summary of Department of Justice, Public Integrity Section cases, October 2002-January 2006;
- an analysis of case law review;
- a summary of research methodology recommendations from political scientists and experts in the field; and
- a CD with summaries of individual reports and literature reviewed, summaries of individual interviews, charts and summaries of news articles, and case law summary charts.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Enclosures

cc: Tom Wilkey, Executive Director  
Julie Thompson-Hodgkins, General Counsel  
Gavin Gilmour, Associate General Counsel



## VOTING FRAUD-VOTER INTIMIDATION WORKING GROUP MEETING

Thursday, May 18, 2006

1:00 PM - 5:30 PM

U.S. Election Assistance Commission  
1225 New York Avenue, N.W., 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

### AGENDA

1:00 PM - 1:30 PM	Introduction
	EAC Authority
	Overview and Purpose of Current Project
	Purpose and Members of the Working Group
	Related EAC Research
1:30 PM - 2:00 PM	Review of Preliminary Research
	Literature & Reports
	Interviews
	News Articles
	Court Cases
2:00 PM - 3:15 PM	Definition & Findings from Current Project Research
3:15 PM - 3:30 PM	Break
3:30 PM - 5:00 PM	Ideas for Future EAC Activities
	Recommended Research Methodologies
	Consultant Recommendations
	Working Group Ideas
5:00 PM - 5:30 PM	EAC Next Steps

007080

## Voting Fraud-Voter Intimidation Working Group

**The Honorable Todd Rokita**

Indiana Secretary of State

Member, EAC Standards Board and the Executive Board of the Standards Board

**Kathy Rogers**

Georgia Director of Elections, Office of the Secretary of State

Member, EAC Standards Board

**J.R. Perez**

Guadalupe County Elections Administrator, TX

**Barbara Arnwine**

Executive Director, Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

Leader of Election Protection Coalition

*(To be represented at May 18, 2006 meeting by Jon M. Greenbaum, Director of the Voting Rights Project for the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law)*

**Robert Bauer**

Chair of the Political Law Practice at the law firm of Perkins Coie, DC

National Counsel for Voter Protection, Democratic National Committee

**Benjamin L. Ginsberg**

Partner, Patton Boggs LLP

Counsel to national Republican campaign committees and Republican candidates

**Mark (Thor) Hearne II**

Partner-Member, Lathrop & Gage, St Louis, MO

National Counsel to the American Center for Voting Rights

**Barry Weinberg**

Former Deputy Chief and Acting Chief, Voting Section, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice

*EAC Invited Technical Advisor:*

**Craig Donsanto**

Director, Election Crimes Branch, U.S. Department of Justice

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## **Defining Election Fraud**

Election fraud is any intentional action, or intentional failure to act when there is a duty to do so, that corrupts the election process in a manner that can impact on election outcomes. This includes interfering in the process by which persons register to vote; the way in which ballots are obtained, marked, or tabulated; and the process by which election results are canvassed and certified.

Examples include the following:

- falsifying voter registration information pertinent to eligibility to cast a vote, (e.g. residence, criminal status, etc);
- altering completed voter registration applications by entering false information;
- knowingly destroying completed voter registration applications (other than spoiled applications) before they can be submitted to the proper election authority;
- knowingly removing eligible voters from voter registration lists, in violation of HAVA, NVRA, or state election laws;
- intentional destruction by election officials of voter registration records or balloting records, in violation of records retention laws, to remove evidence of election fraud;
- vote buying;
- voting in the name of another;
- voting more than once;
- coercing a voter's choice on an absentee ballot;
- using a false name and/or signature on an absentee ballot;
- destroying or misappropriating an absentee ballot;
- felons, or in some states ex-felons, who vote when they know they are ineligible to do so;
- misleading an ex-felon about his or her right to vote;
- voting by non-citizens who know they are ineligible to do so;
- intimidating practices aimed at vote suppression or deterrence, including the abuse of challenge laws;
- deceiving voters with false information (e.g.; deliberately directing voters to the wrong polling place or providing false information on polling hours and dates);
- knowingly failing to accept voter registration applications, to provide ballots, or to accept and count voted ballots in accordance with the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act;
- intentional miscounting of ballots by election officials;
- intentional misrepresentation of vote tallies by election officials;

- acting in any other manner with the intention of suppressing voter registration or voting, or interfering with vote counting and the certification of the vote.

Voting fraud does not include mistakes made in the course of voter registration, balloting, or tabulating ballots and certifying results. For purposes of the EAC study, it also does not include violations of campaign finance laws.

## **Existing Literature Reviewed**

### **Reports**

The Long Shadow of Jim Crow, People for the American Way and the NAACP

The New Poll Tax, Laughlin McDonald

Wisconsin Audit Report, Voter Registration Elections Board

Preliminary Findings, Milwaukee Joint Task Force Investigating Possible Election Fraud

Building Confidence in U.S. Elections, National Commission on Federal Election Reform (Carter/Baker Report)

Response to the Report of the 2005 Commission on Federal Election Reform (Carter/Baker Report), The Brennan Center and Professor Spencer Overton

Republican Ballot Security Programs: Vote Protection or Minority Vote Suppression – or Both?, Chandler Davidson

A Crazy Quilt of Tiny Pieces: State and Local Administration of American Criminal Disenfranchisement Law, Alec Ewald

Vote Fraud, Intimidation and Suppression in the 2004 Presidential Election, American Center for Voting Rights

America's Modern Poll Tax, The Advancement Project

Analysis of the September 15, 2005 Voter Fraud Report Submitted to the New Jersey Attorney General, The Brennan Center and Professor Michael McDonald

Democracy at Risk: The November 2004 Election in Ohio, Democratic National Committee

Department of Justice Public Integrity Reports 2002, 2003, 2004

Prosecution of Election Fraud under United States Federal Law, Craig Donsanto

Election Protection 2004, Election Protection Coalition

The Federal Crime of Election Fraud, Craig Donsanto

Views of Selected Local Election Officials on Managing Voter Registration and Ensuring Eligible Citizens Can Vote, General Accounting Office

Securing the Vote: An Analysis of Election Fraud, Lori Minnite

Shattering the Myth: An Initial Snapshot of Voter Disenfranchisement in the 2004 Elections, People for the American Way, NAACP, Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights

### **Books**

Stealing Elections, John Fund

Steal this Vote: Dirty Elections and the Rotten History of Democracy in American, Andrew Gumbel

Deliver the Vote: A History of Election Fraud, An American Political Tradition – 1742-2004, Tracey Campbell

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the White House, David E. Johnson and Jonny R. Johnson

Fooled Again, Mark Crispin Miller

### **Legal**

*Indiana Democratic Party vs. Rokita*

*Common Cause of Georgia vs. Billup*

U.S. Department of Justice Section 5 Recommendation Memorandum (Georgia voter identification)

## Interviews

### Common Themes

- There is virtually universal agreement that absentee ballot fraud is the biggest problem, with vote buying and registration fraud coming in after that. The vote buying often comes in the form of payment for absentee ballots, although not always. Some absentee ballot fraud is part of an organized effort; some is by individuals, who sometimes are not even aware that what they are doing is illegal. Voter registration fraud seems to take the form of people signing up with false names. Registration fraud seems to be most common where people doing the registration were paid by the signature.
- There is widespread but not unanimous agreement that there is little polling place fraud, or at least much less than is claimed, including voter impersonation, "dead" voters, noncitizen voting and felon voters. Those few who believe it occurs often enough to be a concern say that it is impossible to show the extent to which it happens, but do point to instances in the press of such incidents. Most people believe that false registration forms have not resulted in polling place fraud, although it may create the perception that vote fraud is possible. Those who believe there is more polling place fraud than reported/investigated/prosecuted believe that registration fraud does lead to fraudulent votes. Jason Torchinsky from the American Center for Voting Rights is the only interviewee who believes that polling place fraud is widespread and among the most significant problems in the system.
- Abuse of challenger laws and abusive challengers seem to be the biggest intimidation/suppression concerns, and many of those interviewed assert that the new identification requirements are the modern version of voter intimidation and suppression. However there is evidence of some continued outright intimidation and suppression, especially in some Native American communities. A number of people also raise the problem of poll workers engaging in harassment of minority voters. Other activities commonly raised were the issue of polling places being moved at the last moment, unequal distribution of voting machines, videotaping of voters at the polls, and targeted misinformation campaigns.
- Several people indicate – including representatives from DOJ -- that for various reasons, the Department of Justice is bringing fewer voter intimidation and suppression cases now and is focusing on matters such as noncitizen voting, double voting and felon voting. While the civil rights section continues to focus on systemic patterns of malfeasance, the public integrity section is focusing now on individuals, on isolated instances of fraud.
- The problem of badly kept voter registration lists, with both ineligible voters remaining on the rolls and eligible voters being taken off, remains a common concern. A few people are also troubled by voters being on registration lists in two states. They said that there was no evidence that this had led to double voting, but it opens the door to the possibility. There is great hope that full implementation of the new requirements of HAVA – done well, a major caveat – will reduce this problem dramatically.

Common Recommendations:

- Many of those interviewed recommend better poll worker training as the best way to improve the process; a few also recommended longer voting times or voting on days other than election day (such as weekends) but fewer polling places so only the best poll workers would be employed
- Many interviewed support stronger criminal laws and increased enforcement of existing laws with respect to both fraud and intimidation. Advocates from across the spectrum expressed frustration with the failure of the Department of Justice to pursue complaints.
  - With respect to the civil rights section, John Tanner indicated that fewer cases are being brought because fewer are warranted – it has become increasingly difficult to know when allegations of intimidation and suppression are credible since it depends on one's definition of intimidation, and because both parties are doing it. Moreover prior enforcement of the laws has now changed the entire landscape – race based problems are rare now. Although challenges based on race and unequal implementation of identification rules would be actionable, Mr. Tanner was unaware of such situations actually occurring and the section has not pursued any such cases.
  - Craig Donsanto of the public integrity section says that while the number of election fraud related complaints have not gone up since 2002, nor has the proportion of legitimate to illegitimate claims of fraud, the number of cases the department is investigating and the number of indictments the section is pursuing are both up dramatically. Since 2002, the department has brought more cases against alien voters, felon voters and double voters than ever before. Mr. Donsanto would like more resources so it can do more and would like to have laws that make it easier for the federal government to assume jurisdiction over voter fraud cases.
- A couple of interviewees recommend a new law that would make it easier to criminally prosecute people for intimidation even when there is not racial animus.
- Several advocate expanded monitoring of the polls, including some associated with the Department of Justice.
- Almost everyone hopes that administrators will maximize the potential of statewide voter registration databases to prevent fraud
- Challenge laws, both with respect to pre-election day challenges and challengers at the polls, need to be revised by all states to ensure they are not used for purposes of wrongful disenfranchisement and harassment
- Several people advocate passage of Senator Barak Obama's "deceptive practices" bill
- There is a split on whether it would be helpful to have nonpartisan election officials – some indicated they thought even if elections officials are elected nonpartisanly they will carry out their duties in biased ways nonetheless. However, most agree that elections officials pursuing partisan agendas is a problem that must be addressed in some fashion. Suggestions included moving

election responsibilities out of the secretary of states' office; increasing transparency in the process; and enacting conflict of interest rules.

- A few recommend returning to allowing use of absentee ballots "for cause" only if it were politically feasible.
- A few recommend enacting a national identification card, including Pat Rogers, an attorney in New Mexico, and Jason Torchinsky from ACVR, who advocates the scheme contemplated in the Carter-Baker Commission Report.
- A couple of interviewees indicated the need for clear standards for the distribution of voting machines

**List of Experts Interviewed**

Wade Henderson, Executive Director, Leadership Conference for Civil Rights

Wendy Weiser, Deputy Director, Democracy Program, The Brennan Center

William Groth, attorney for the plaintiffs in the Indiana voter identification litigation

Lori Minnite, Barnard College, Columbia University

Neil Bradley, ACLU Voting Rights Project

Nina Perales, Counsel, Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund

Pat Rogers, attorney, New Mexico

Rebecca Vigil-Giron, Secretary of State, New Mexico

Sarah Ball Johnson, Executive Director of the State Board of Elections, Kentucky

Stephen Ansolobhere, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Chandler Davidson, Rice University

Tracey Campbell, author, *Deliver the Vote*

Douglas Webber, Assistant Attorney General, Indiana, (defendant in the Indiana voter identification litigation)

Heather Dawn Thompson, Director of Government Relations, National Congress of American Indians

Jason Torchinsky, Assistant General Counsel, American Center for Voting Rights

Robin DeJarnette, Executive Director, American Center for Voting Rights

Joseph Rich, former Director of the Voting Section, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice

Joseph Sandler, Counsel to the Democratic National Committee

John Ravitz, Executive Director, New York City Board of Elections

John Tanner, Director, Voting Section, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice

Kevin Kennedy, Executive Director of the State Board of Elections, Wisconsin

Evelyn Stratton, Justice, Supreme Court of Ohio

Tony Sirvello, Executive Director, International Association of  
Clerks, Records, Election Officials and Treasurers

Harry Van Sickle, Commissioner of Elections, Pennsylvania

Craig Donsanto, Director, Public Integrity Section, U.S. Department of Justice

Sharon Priest, former Secretary of State, Arkansas

## **Nexis Articles Analysis**

Note: The search terms used were ones agreed upon by both Job Serebrov and Tova Wang and are available upon request. A more systematic, numerical analysis of the data contained in the Nexis charts is currently being undertaken. What follows is an overview.

Recommendation: In phase 2, consultants should conduct a Nexis search that specifically attempts to follow up on the cases for which no resolution is evident from this particular initial search.

## **Overview of the Articles**

### *Absentee Ballots*

According to press reports, absentee ballots are abused in a variety of ways:

1. Campaign workers, candidates and others coerce the voting choices of vulnerable populations, usually elderly voters
2. Workers for groups and individuals have attempted to vote absentee in the names of the deceased
3. Workers for groups, campaign workers and individuals have attempted to forge the names of other voters on absentee ballot requests and absentee ballots and thus vote multiple times

It is unclear how often actual convictions result from these activities (a handful of articles indicate convictions and guilty pleas), but this is an area in which there have been a substantial number of official investigations and actual charges filed, according to news reports where such information is available. A few of the allegations became part of civil court proceedings contesting the outcome of the election.

While absentee fraud allegations turn up throughout the country, a few states have had several such cases. Especially of note are Indiana, New Jersey, South Dakota, and most particularly, Texas. Interestingly, there were no articles regarding Oregon, where the entire system is vote by mail.

### *Voter Registration Fraud*

According to press reports, the following types of allegations of voter registration fraud are most common:

1. Registering in the name of dead people
2. Fake names and other information on voter registration forms
3. Illegitimate addresses used on voter registration forms
4. Voters being tricked into registering for a particular party under false pretenses

5. Destruction of voter registration forms depending on the party the voter registered with

There was only one self evident instance of a noncitizen registering to vote. Many of the instances reported on included official investigations and charges filed, but few actual convictions, at least from the news reporting. There have been multiple reports of registration fraud in California, Colorado, Florida, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

*Voter Intimidation and Suppression*

This is the area which had the most articles in part because there were so many allegations of intimidation and suppression during the 2004 election. Most of these remained allegations and no criminal investigation or prosecution ensued. Some of the cases did end up in civil litigation.

This is not to say that these alleged activities were confined to 2004 – there were several allegations made during every year studied. Most notable were the high number of allegations of voter intimidation and harassment reported during the 2003 Philadelphia mayoral race.

A very high number of the articles were about the issue of challenges to voters' registration status and challengers at the polling places. There were many allegations that planned challenge activities were targeted at minority communities. Some of the challenges were concentrated in immigrant communities.

However, the tactics alleged varied greatly. The types of activities discussed also include the following:

- Photographing or videotaping voters coming out of polling places.
- Improper demands for identification
- Poll watchers harassing voters
- Poll workers being hostile to or aggressively challenging voters
- Disproportionate police presence
- Poll watchers wearing clothes with messages that seemed intended to intimidate
- Insufficient voting machines and unmanageably long lines

Although the incidents reported on occurred everywhere, not surprisingly, many came from "battleground" states. There were several such reports out of Florida, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

*"Dead Voters and Multiple Voting"*

There were a high number of articles about people voting in the names of the dead and voting more than once. Many of these articles were marked by allegations of big numbers of people committing these frauds, and relatively few of these allegations

turning out to be accurate according to investigations by the newspapers themselves, elections officials and criminal investigators. Often the problem turned out to be a result of administrative error, poll workers mis-marking of voter lists, a flawed registration list and/or errors made in the attempt to match names of voters on the list with the names of the people who voted. In a good number of cases, there were allegations that charges of double voting by political leaders were an effort to scare people away from the voting process.

Nonetheless there were a few cases of people actually being charged and/or convicted for these kinds of activities. Most of the cases involved a person voting both by absentee ballot and in person. A few instances involved people voting both during early voting and on Election Day, which calls into question the proper marking and maintenance of the voting lists. In many instances, the person charged claimed not to have voted twice on purpose. A very small handful of cases involved a voter voting in more than one county and there was one substantiated case involving a person voting in more than one state. Other instances in which such efforts were alleged were disproved by officials.

In the case of voting in the name of a dead person, the problem lay in the voter registration list not being properly maintained, i.e. the person was still on the registration list as eligible to vote, and a person taking criminal advantage of that. In total, the San Francisco Chronicle found 5 such cases in March 2004; the AP cited a newspaper analysis of five such persons in an Indiana primary in May 2004; and a senate committee found two people to have voted in the names of the dead in 2005.

As usual, there were a disproportionate number of such articles coming out of Florida. Notably, there were three articles out of Oregon, which has one hundred percent vote-by-mail.

#### *Vote Buying*

There were a surprising number of articles about vote buying cases. A few of these instances involved long-time investigations in three particular jurisdictions as detailed in the vote buying summary. There were more official investigations, indictments and convictions/pleas in this area. All of these cases are concentrated in the Midwest and South.

#### *Deceptive Practices*

In 2004 there were numerous reports of intentional disinformation about voting eligibility and the voting process meant to confuse voters about their rights and when and where to vote. Misinformation came in the form of flyers, phone calls, letters, and even people going door to door. Many of the efforts were reportedly targeted at minority communities. A disproportionate number of them came from key battleground states, particularly Florida, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. From the news reports found, only one of these instances was officially investigated, the case in Oregon involving the destruction

of voter registration forms. There were no reports of prosecutions or any other legal proceeding.

#### *Non-citizen Voting*

There were surprisingly few articles regarding noncitizen registration and voting – just seven all together, in seven different states across the country. They were also evenly split between allegations of noncitizens registering and noncitizens voting. In one case charges were filed against ten individuals. In one case a judge in a civil suit found there was illegal noncitizen voting. Three instances prompted official investigations. Two cases, from this nexis search, remained just allegations of noncitizen voting.

#### *Felon Voting*

Although there were only thirteen cases of felon voting, some of them involved large numbers of voters. Most notably, of course, are the cases that came to light in the Washington gubernatorial election contest (see Washington summary) and in Wisconsin (see Wisconsin summary). In several states, the main problem has the large number of ineligible felons that remained on the voting list.

#### *Election Official Fraud*

In most of the cases in which fraud by elections officials is suspected or alleged, it is difficult to determine whether it is incompetence or a crime. There are several cases of ballots gone missing, ballots unaccounted for and ballots ending up in a worker's possession. In two cases workers were said to have changed peoples' votes. The one instance in which widespread ballot box stuffing by elections workers was alleged was in Washington State. The judge in the civil trial of that election contest did not find that elections workers had committed fraud. Four of the cases are from Texas.

**Rough Summary of Department of Justice, Public Integrity Section Activities,  
October 2002-January 2006\***

Prosecutions and Convictions-- Individuals

Noncitizen voting: 20  
Vote buying: 49  
Double voting: 12  
Registration fraud: 13  
Civil Rights: 4  
Voter Intimidation: 2  
Unclear: 1

Open Investigations (note: a few cases overlap with prosecutions and convictions)

Noncitizen voting: 3  
Vote buying: 25  
Double voting: 15  
Registration fraud: 29  
Absentee ballot fraud: 9  
Official: 8  
Ineligibles: 4  
Deceptive Practices: 1  
Civil Rights: 14  
Intimidation: 6  
Other: 2

Cases and Investigations Closed for Lack of Evidence

Civil Rights: 8  
Official: 12  
Registration Fraud: 12  
Absentee Ballot Fraud: 14  
Ineligible Voting: 3  
Intimidation: 8  
Double Voting: 5  
Ballot Box Stuffing: 1  
Vote Buying: 14  
Ballot/machine tampering: 2  
Other: 8  
Unclear: 3

\*Based upon information available as of January 2006

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## Case Summaries

After reviewing over 40,000 cases, the majority of which came from appeals courts, I have found comparatively very few which are applicable to this study. Of those that are applicable, no apparent thematic pattern emerges. However, it seems that the greatest areas of fraud and intimidation have shifted from past patterns of stealing votes to present problems with voter registration, voter identification, the proper delivery and counting of absentee and overseas ballots, provisional voting, vote buying, and challenges to felon eligibility. But because so few cases provided a picture of these current problems, I suggest that case research for the second phase of this project concentrate on state trial-level decisions.

*Job Serebrov*  
*May 2006*

**Determining a Methodology for Measuring Voter Fraud and Intimidation:  
Recommendations of Political Scientists**

The following is a summary of interviews conducted with a number of political scientists and experts in the field as to how one might undertake a comprehensive examination of voter fraud and intimidation. A list of the individuals interviewed and their ideas are available, and all of the individuals welcome any further questions or explanations of their recommended procedures.

- 1) In analyzing instances of alleged fraud and intimidation, we should look to criminology as a model. In criminology, experts use two sources: the Uniform Crime Reports, which are all reports made to the police, and the Victimization Survey, which asks the general public whether a particular incident has happened to them. After surveying what the most common allegations are, we should conduct a survey of the general public that ask whether they have committed certain acts or been subjected to any incidents of fraud or intimidation. This would require using a very large sample, and we would need to employ the services of an expert in survey data collection. (Stephen Ansolobehere, MIT)
- 2) Several political scientists with expertise in these types of studies recommended a methodology that includes interviews, focus groups, and a limited survey. In determining who to interview and where the focus groups should be drawn from, they recommend the following procedure:
  - Pick a number of places that have historically had many reports of fraud and/or intimidation; from that pool pick 10 that are geographically and demographically diverse, and have had a diversity of problems
  - Pick a number of places that have not had many reports of fraud and/or intimidation; from that pool pick 10 places that match the geographic and demographic make-up of the previous ten above (and, if possible, have comparable elections practices)
  - Assess the resulting overall reports and impressions resulting from these interviews and focus groups, and examine comparisons and differences among the states and what may give rise to them.

In conducting a survey of elections officials, district attorneys, district election officers, they recommend that:

- The survey sample be large in order to be able to get the necessary subsets
- The survey must include a random set of counties where there have and have not been a large number of allegations

(Allan Lichtman, American University; Thad Hall, University of Utah; Bernard Grofman, UC - Irvine)

- 3) Another political scientist recommended employing a methodology that relies on qualitative data drawn from in-depth interviews with key critics and experts on all sides of the debate on fraud; quantitative data collected through a survey of state and local elections and law enforcement officials; and case studies. Case studies should focus on the five or ten states, regions or cities where there has been a history of election fraud to examine past and present problems. The survey should be mailed to each state's attorney general and secretary of state, each county district attorney's office and each county board of elections in the 50 states. (Lorraine Minnite, Barnard College)
- 4) The research should be a two-step process. Using LexisNexis and other research tools, a search should be conducted of news media accounts over the past decade. Second, interviews with a systematic sample of election officials nationwide and in selected states should be conducted. (Chandler Davidson, Rice University)
- 5) One expert in the field posits that we can never come up with a number that accurately represents either the incidence of fraud or the incidence of voter intimidation. Therefore, the better approach is to do an assessment of what is most likely to happen, what election violations are most likely to be committed – in other words, a risk analysis. This would include an analysis of what it would actually take to commit various acts, e.g. the cost/benefit of each kind of violation. From there we could rank the likely prevalence of each type of activity and examine what measures are or could be effective in combating them. (Wendy Weiser, Brennan Center of New York University)
- 6) Replicate a study in the United States done abroad by Susan Hyde of the University of California- San Diego examining the impact of impartial poll site observers on the incidence of election fraud. Doing this retrospectively would require the following steps:
  - Find out where there were federal observers
  - Get precinct level voting information for those places
  - Analyze whether there was any difference in election outcomes in those places with and without observers, and whether any of these results seem anomalous.

Despite the tremendous differences in the political landscapes of the countries examined by Hyde in previous studies and the U.S., Hyde believes this study could be effectively replicated in this country by sending observers to a random sample of precincts. Rather than compare the incumbent's vote share, such factors such as voter complaints, voter turnout, number of provisional ballots used, composition of the electorate, as well as any anomalous voting results could be compared between sites with and without monitors.

For example, if intimidation is occurring, and if reputable monitors make intimidation less likely or voters more confident, then turnout should be higher on average in monitored precincts than in unmonitored precincts. If polling station officials are intentionally refusing to issue provisional ballots, and the polling station officials are

more likely to adhere to regulations while being monitored, the average number of provisional ballots should be higher in monitored precincts than in unmonitored precincts. If monitors cause polling station officials to adhere more closely to regulations, then there should be fewer complaints (in general) about monitored than unmonitored precincts (this could also be reversed if monitors made voters more likely to complain).

Again, random assignment controls for all of the other factors that otherwise influence these variables.

One of the downsides of this approach is it does not get at some forms of fraud, e.g. absentee ballot fraud; those would have to be analyzed separately

7) Another political scientist recommends conducting an analysis of vote fraud claims and purging of registration rolls by list matching. Allegations of illegal voting often are based on matching of names and birth dates. Alleged instances of double voting are based on matching the names and birth dates of persons found on voting records. Allegations of ineligible felon (depending on state law), deceased, and of non-citizen voting are based on matching lists of names, birth dates, and sometimes addresses of such people against a voting records. Anyone with basic relational database skills can perform such matching in a matter of minutes.

However, there are a number of pitfalls for the unwary that can lead to grossly over-estimating the number of fraudulent votes, such as missing or ignored middle names and suffixes or matching on missing birth dates. Furthermore, there is a surprising statistical fact that a group of about three hundred people with the same first and last name are almost assured to share the exact same birth date, including year. In a large state, it is not uncommon for hundreds of Robert Smiths (and other common names) to have voted. Thus, allegations of vote fraud or purging of voter registration rolls by list matching almost assuredly will find a large proportion of false positives: people who voted legally or are registered to vote legally.

Statistics can be rigorously applied to determine how many names would be expected to be matched by chance. A simulation approach is best applied here: randomly assign a birth date to an arbitrary number of people and observe how many match within the list or across lists. The simulation is repeated many times to average out the variation due to chance. The results can then be matched back to actual voting records and purge lists, for example, in the hotly contested states of Ohio or Florida, or in states with Election Day registration where there are concerns that easy access to voting permits double voting. This analysis will rigorously identify the magnitude alleged voter fraud, and may very well find instances of alleged fraud that exceed what might have otherwise happened by chance.

This same political scientist also recommends another way to examine the problem: look at statistics on provisional voting: the number cast might provide indications of intimidation (people being challenged at the polls) and the number of those not counted

would be indications of "vote fraud." One could look at those jurisdictions in the Election Day Survey with a disproportionate number of provisional ballots cast and cross reference it with demographics and number of provisional ballots discarded. (Michael McDonald, George Mason University)

- 8) Spencer Overton, in a forthcoming law review article entitled *Voter Identification*, suggests a methodology that employs three approaches— investigations of voter fraud, random surveys of voters who purported to vote, and an examination of death rolls provide a better understanding of the frequency of fraud. He says all three approaches have strengths and weaknesses, and thus the best studies would employ all three to assess the extent of voter fraud. An excerpt follows:

1. *Investigations and Prosecutions of Voter Fraud*

Policymakers should develop databases that record all investigations, allegations, charges, trials, convictions, acquittals, and plea bargains regarding voter fraud. Existing studies are incomplete but provide some insight. For example, a statewide survey of each of Ohio's 88 county boards of elections found only four instances of ineligible persons attempting to vote out of a total of 9,078,728 votes cast in the state's 2002 and 2004 general elections. This is a fraud rate of 0.00000045 percent. The Carter-Baker Commission's Report noted that since October 2002, federal officials had charged 89 individuals with casting multiple votes, providing false information about their felon status, buying votes, submitting false voter registration information, and voting improperly as a non-citizen. Examined in the context of the 196,139,871 ballots cast between October 2002 and August 2005, this represents a fraud rate of 0.0000005 percent (note also that not all of the activities charged would have been prevented by a photo identification requirement).

A more comprehensive study should distinguish voter fraud that could be prevented by a photo identification requirement from other types of fraud — such as absentee voting and stuffing ballot boxes — and obtain statistics on the factors that led law enforcement to prosecute fraud. The study would demand significant resources because it would require that researchers interview and pour over the records of local district attorneys and election boards.

Hard data on investigations, allegations, charges, pleas, and prosecutions is important because it quantifies the amount of fraud officials detect. Even if prosecutors vigorously pursue voter fraud, however, the number of fraud cases charged probably does not capture the total amount of voter fraud. Information on official investigations, charges, and prosecutions should be supplemented by surveys of voters and a comparison of voting rolls to death rolls.

2. *Random Surveys of Voters*

Random surveys could give insight about the percentage of votes cast fraudulently. For example, political scientists could contact a statistically representative sampling of 1,000 people who purportedly voted at the polls in the last election, ask them if they actually voted, and confirm the percentage who are valid voters. Researchers should conduct the survey soon after an election to locate as many legitimate voters as possible with fresh memories.

Because many respondents would perceive voting as a social good, some who did not vote might claim that they did, which may underestimate the extent of fraud. A surveyor might mitigate this skew through the framing of the question ("I've got a record that you voted. Is that true?").

Further, some voters will not be located by researchers and others will refuse to talk to researchers. Photo identification proponents might construe these non-respondents as improper registrations that were used to commit voter fraud.

Instead of surveying all voters to determine the amount of fraud, researchers might reduce the margin of error by focusing on a random sampling of voters who signed affidavits in the three states that request photo identification but also allow voters to establish their identity through affidavit—Florida, Louisiana, and South Dakota. In South Dakota, for example, only two percent of voters signed affidavits to establish their identity. If the survey indicates that 95 percent of those who signed affidavits are legitimate voters (and the other 5 percent were shown to be either fraudulent or were non-responsive), this suggests that voter fraud accounts for, at the maximum, 0.1 percent of ballots cast.

The affidavit study, however, is limited to three states, and it is unclear whether this sample is representative of other states (the difficulty may be magnified in Louisiana in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina's displacement of hundreds of thousands of voters). Further, the affidavit study reveals information about the amount of fraud in a photo identification state with an affidavit exception—more voter fraud may exist in a state that does not request photo identification.

### 3. *Examining Death Rolls*

A comparison of death rolls to voting rolls might also provide an estimate of fraud.

Imagine that one million people live in state A, which has no documentary identification requirement. Death records show that 20,000 people passed away in state A in 2003. A cross-referencing of this list to the voter rolls shows that 10,000 of those who died were registered voters, and these names remained on the voter rolls during the November 2004 election. Researchers would look at what percentage of the 10,000 dead-but-registered people who "voted" in the November 2004 election. A researcher should distinguish the votes cast in the name of the dead at the polls from those cast

absentee (which a photo identification requirement would not prevent). This number would be extrapolated to the electorate as a whole.

This methodology also has its strengths and weaknesses. If fraudulent voters target the dead, the study might overestimate the fraud that exists among living voters (although a low incidence of fraud among deceased voters might suggest that fraud among all voters is low). The appearance of fraud also might be inflated by false positives produced by a computer match of different people with the same name. Photo identification advocates would likely assert that the rate of voter fraud could be higher among fictitious names registered, and that the death record survey would not capture that type of fraud because fictitious names registered would not show up in the death records. Nevertheless, this study, combined with the other two, would provide important insight into the magnitude of fraud likely to exist in the absence of a photo identification requirement.



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OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN

October 19, 2006

Ralph G. Neas  
President, People for the American Way Foundation  
2000 M Street, NW  
Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20036

Via Facsimile Transmission ONLY  
202-293-2672

RE: October 18, 2006 Letter

Dear Mr. Neas:

Your letter of October 18, 2006 requests the release of EAC's Voter Fraud and Intimidation Report. I would like to take this opportunity to clarify the purpose and status of this study.

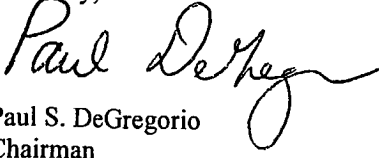
In late 2005, EAC hired two consultants for the purpose of assisting EAC with two things: 1) developing a uniform definition of the phrase voter fraud, and 2) making recommendations on how to further study the existence, prosecution, and means of deterring such voter fraud. In May 2006, a status report on this study was given to the EAC Standards Board and EAC Board of Advisors during their public meetings. During the same week, a working group convened to react to and provide comment on the progress and potential conclusions that could be reached from the work of the two consultants.

The conversation at the working group meeting was lively on the very points that we were trying to accomplish as a part of this study, namely what is voter fraud and how do we pursue studying it. Many of the proposed conclusions that were suggested by the consultants were challenged by the working group members. As such, the consultants were tasked with reviewing the concerns expressed at the working group meeting, conducting additional research as necessary, and providing a draft report to EAC that took into account the working group's concerns and issues.

That draft report is currently being vetted by EAC staff. EAC will release a final report from this study after it has conducted a review of the draft provided by the consultants. However, it is important to remember the purpose of this study -- finding a uniform definition of voter fraud and making recommendations on how to study the existence, prosecution and deterrence of voter fraud -- as it will serve as the basis of the EAC report on this study.

Thank you for your letter. You can be assured that as soon as a final report on the fraud and intimidation study is available, a copy will be made available to the public.

Sincerely,

  
Paul S. DeGregorio  
Chairman



---

**FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL SHEET**

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**FROM: RALPH G. NEAS**  
**PRESIDENT, PEOPLE FOR THE AMERICAN WAY FOUNDATION**

**DATE: 10/18/06**

**TOTAL NO. OF PAGES INCLUDING COVER: 3**

**RE: REPORT COMMISSIONED BY THE EAC ON VOTER FRAUD**

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☐ URGENT    ☒ FOR REVIEW    ☐ PLEASE COMMENT    ☐ PLEASE REPLY    ☐ PLEASE RECYCLE

---

**NOTES/COMMENTS:**

Cc: USPS Mail

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2000 M STREET, NW ♦ SUITE 400 ♦ WASHINGTON, DC 20036  
TELEPHONE 202-467-4999 ♦ FAX 202-293-2672 ♦ EMAIL [pfaw@pfaw.org](mailto:pfaw@pfaw.org)

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October 18, 2006

Chairman Paul DeGregorio  
Commissioner Donetta L. Davidson  
Commissioner Gracia M. Hillman  
United States Election Assistance Commission  
1225 New York Avenue N.W., Suite - 1100  
Washington, DC 20005  
Fax: (202) 566-3127

Dear Commissioners,

On October 11<sup>th</sup>, *USA Today* published an article describing the report commissioned by the EAC on voter fraud. We write today to urge the EAC to release this report.

As a 25 year old civil rights and civil liberties organization, People For the American Way Foundation (PFAWF) and our sister organization, People For the American Way (PFAW) have long been dedicated to ensuring the integrity of our elections. In particular in the years since the 2000 election, PFAWF and other principle partners such as the NAACP and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, have carried out a program called Election Protection to ensure that all eligible voters are able to vote and have that vote counted as cast.

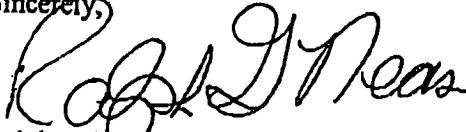
We know that voter fraud and intimidation occur- we've seen the long lines, the erroneous purges, the misleading flyers and phone calls. And yet there seems to be little attention to these matters on the state and federal level.

Instead, a disproportionate amount of time and energy are spent on measures that purport to curb voter fraud by requiring voters to produce proof of citizenship and identity to vote. In actuality, these measures do little to secure the elections and much to disenfranchise otherwise eligible voters. Indeed we are weeks away from an election where thousands of eligible voters may be disenfranchised by overly restrictive voter identification laws. That presents a real threat to the integrity of our elections and the health of our democracy.

The report that the EAC commissioned from voting experts would make a vitally important contribution to the national discourse on the reality of voter fraud. In light of the numerous claims regarding the prevalence of voter fraud, this report provides a much

needed analysis about the state of our electoral process. While media reports indicate that this tax-payer funded report is final, even if there are outstanding concerns within the EAC, we implore you to move forward with releasing the report as is, and to hold a public hearing to address any potential issues. Again, the importance of the information in this report is paramount and the public deserves such full disclosure. The report should be released immediately so that those who are concerned about ensuring the integrity of elections can benefit from its findings.

Sincerely,



Ralph G. Neas

President, People For the American Way Foundation

Cc: Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist  
Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid  
Senator Trent Lott, Chair, Senate Rules and Administration  
Senator Chris Dodd, Ranking Member, Senate Rules and Administration  
House Majority Leader John Boehner  
House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi  
Representative Vernon Ehlers, Chair, House Administration  
Representative Juanita Millender-McDonald, Ranking Member, House Administration

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TOTAL P.03



U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION  
1225 NEW YORK AVENUE, N.W., SUITE 1100  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN

October 19, 2006

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Sincerely,

Paul S. DeGregorio  
Chairman



UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

624 NINTH STREET, NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20425

WWW.USCCR.GOV

MICHAEL YAKI  
COMMISSIONER

October 17, 2006

The Honorable Gerald Reynolds  
Chair, United States Commission on Civil Rights  
624 9<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20425

RE: Elections Assistance Commission Report

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dear Mr. Chairman

I am writing to urge you and my fellow Commissioners to exercise our Congressionally-authorized subpoena power to compel the production of the report on voting fraud that the United States Election Assistance Commission ("EAC") refuses to release. It was clearly evident during our briefing last week on Voter Fraud and Intimidation that the results of the EAC report could have a significant impact on the quality and quantitative analysis of any briefing report that might be issued by the Commission.

According to an article in the October 11<sup>th</sup> edition of USA Today, "the bipartisan report by two consultants to the election commission casts doubt on the problem those laws are intended to address." Indeed, "there is widespread but not unanimous agreement that there is little polling-place fraud, or at least much less than is claimed, including voter impersonation, 'dead' voters, non-citizen voting and felon voters" according to the article. Further, the USA Today article states that the report, "prepared by Tova Wang, an elections expert at the Century Foundation think tank, and Job Serebrov, an Arkansas attorney, says most fraud occurs in the absentee ballot process, such as through coercion or forgery."

Just based on this news article, the report has information clearly germane to our briefing and subsequent analysis of the testimony provided. I believe that in carrying out our Congressional mandate, the need to have access to and analyze the Election Assistance Commission report is a necessary prerequisite to an unbiased and informed report on Voter Fraud.

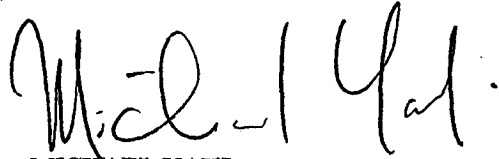
It is my understanding that the Chair has the authority under law to sign a subpoena on his own accord or, alternatively to seek a vote of the Commission to issue said subpoena. I believe the subpoena would be very short and direct: the production of the suppressed report.

Page 2  
Letter from Commissioner Yaki to Chair Reynolds

I respectfully request that the Chair immediately issue a subpoena or, in the alternative, conduct an immediate notational vote on the matter of issuing a subpoena to compel production of the report.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Yaki". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

MICHAEL YAKI  
Commissioner  
United States Commission on Civil Rights

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TAMAR's comments

**EAC REPORT ON VOTING FRAUD AND VOTER INTIMIDATION STUDY**

~~voter~~ **INTRODUCTION**

Voting fraud and ~~voter~~ intimidation are phrases familiar to many voting-aged Americans. However, they mean different things to different people. Voting fraud and voter intimidation are phrases used to refer to crimes, civil rights violations, and, at times, even the correct application of state or federal laws to the voting process. Past study of these topics has been as varied as its perceived meaning. In an effort to help understand the realities of voting fraud and voter intimidation in our elections, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) has begun ~~this phase of~~ <sup>on</sup> a comprehensive study on election crimes. In ~~the~~ <sup>on</sup> phase of its examination, EAC has developed a definition of election crimes and adopted some research methodology on how to assess the existence and enforcement of election crimes in ~~this country~~ <sup>the United States</sup>.

**PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE EAC STUDY**

Section 241 of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) calls on the EAC to research and study various issues related to the administration of elections. During Fiscal Year 2006, EAC began projects to research several of the listed topics. These topics for research were chosen in consultation with the EAC Standards Board and Board of Advisors. Voting fraud and voter intimidation are topics that the EAC as well as its advisory boards felt were important to study to help improve the administration of elections for federal office.

EAC began this study with the intention of identifying a common understanding of voting fraud and voter intimidation and devising a plan for a comprehensive study of these issues. This study was not intended to be a comprehensive review of existing voting fraud and voter intimidation actions, laws, or prosecutions. To conduct ~~that type of extensive research~~ <sup>later comprehensive</sup>, a basic understanding had to first be established regarding what is commonly referred to as voting fraud and voter intimidation. Once that understanding was reached, a definition had to be crafted to refine and in some cases limit the scope of what reasonably can be researched and studied as evidence of voting fraud and voter intimidation. That definition will serve as the basis for recommending a plan for a comprehensive study of the area.

To accomplish these tasks, EAC employed two consultants, Job Serebrov and Tova Wang,<sup>1</sup> who worked with EAC staff and interns to conduct the research that forms the basis of this report. The consultants were chosen based upon their experience with the topic ~~and~~ <sup>in order to</sup> assure a bipartisan representation in this study. The consultants and EAC staff were charged ~~to~~ <sup>with</sup> (1) research the current state of information on the topic of voting

<sup>1</sup> Biographies for Job Serebrov and Tova Wang, the two consultants hired by EAC, are attached as Appendix "1".

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fraud and voter intimidation; (2) develop a uniform definition of voting fraud and voter intimidation; and (3) propose recommended strategies for researching this subject.

EAC consultants reviewed existing studies, articles, reports and case law on voting fraud and intimidation and conducted interviews with experts in the field. EAC consultants and staff then presented their initial findings to a working group that provided feedback. The working group participants were:

**The Honorable Todd Rokita**  
Indiana Secretary of State  
Member, EAC Standards Board and the  
Executive Board of the Standards Board

**Kathy Rogers**  
Georgia Director of Elections, Office of  
the Secretary of State  
Member, EAC Standards Board

**J.R. Perez**  
Guadalupe County Elections  
Administrator, Texas

**Barbara Arnwine**  
Executive Director, Lawyers Committee  
for Civil Rights under Law  
Leader of Election Protection Coalition

**Benjamin L. Ginsberg**  
Partner, Patton Boggs LLP  
Counsel to National Republican  
Campaign Committees and Republican  
candidates

**Robert Bauer**  
Chair of the Political Law Practice at the  
law firm of Perkins Coie, District of  
Columbia  
National Counsel for Voter Protection,  
Democratic National Committee

**Mark (Thor) Hearne II**  
Partner-Member, Lathrop & Gage, St  
Louis, Missouri  
National Counsel to the American  
Center for Voting Rights

**Barry Weinberg**  
Former Deputy Chief and Acting Chief,  
Voting Section, Civil Rights Division,  
U.S. Department of Justice

*Technical Advisor:*  
**Craig Donsanto**  
Director, Election Crimes Branch, U.S.  
Department of Justice

Throughout the process, EAC staff assisted the consultants by providing statutes and cases on this subject as well as supervision on the direction, scope and product of this research.

The consultants drafted a report for EAC that included their summaries of relevant cases, studies and reports on voting fraud and voter intimidation, <sup>voter</sup> and summaries of the interviews ~~that they~~ conducted. The draft report also provided a definition of voting fraud and intimidation and made certain recommendations developed by the consultants or by the working group on how to pursue further study of this subject. This document was vetted and edited by EAC staff to produce this final report.

## EXISTING INFORMATION ABOUT FRAUD AND INTIMIDATION

To begin our study of voting fraud and voter intimidation, EAC consultants reviewed the current body of information on voting fraud and voter intimidation. The information available about these issues comes largely from a very limited body of reports, articles, and books. There are volumes of case law and statutes in the various states that also impact our understanding of what actions or inactions are legally considered fraud or intimidation. Last, there is anecdotal information available through media reports and interviews with persons who have administered elections, prosecuted fraud, and studied these problems. All of these resources were used by EAC consultants to provide an introductory look at the available knowledge of voting fraud and voter intimidation.

### Reports and Studies of Voting fraud and Intimidation

Over the years, there have been a number of studies conducted and reports published about voting fraud and voter intimidation. EAC reviewed many of these studies and reports to develop a base-line understanding of the information that is currently available about voting fraud and voter intimidation. EAC consultants reviewed the following articles, reports and books, summaries of which are available in Appendix “2”:

#### Articles and Reports

- People for the American Way and the NAACP, “The Long Shadow of Jim Crow,” December 6, 2004.
- Laughlin McDonald, “The New Poll Tax,” *The American Prospect* vol. 13 no. 23, December 30, 2002.
- Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau, “An Evaluation: Voter Registration Elections Board” Report 05-12, September, 2005.
- Milwaukee Police Department, Milwaukee County District Attorney’s Office, Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Attorney’s Office “Preliminary Findings of Joint Task Force Investigating Possible Election Fraud,” May 10, 2005.
- National Commission on Federal Election Reform, “Building Confidence in U.S. Elections,” Center for Democracy and Election Management, American University, September 2005.
- The Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law and Spencer Overton, Commissioner and Law Professor at George Washington University School of Law “Response to the Report of the 2005 Commission on Federal Election Reform,” September 19, 2005.

- Chandler Davidson, Tanya Dunlap, Gale Kenny, and Benjamin Wise, "Republican Ballot Security Programs: Vote Protection or Minority Vote Suppression – or Both?" A Report to the Center for Voting Rights & Protection, September, 2004.
- Alec Ewald, "A Crazy Quilt of Tiny Pieces: State and Local Administration of American Criminal Disenfranchisement Law," The Sentencing Project, November 2005.
- American Center for Voting Rights "Vote Fraud, Intimidation and Suppression in the 2004 Presidential Election," August 2, 2005.
- The Advancement Project, "America's Modern Poll Tax: How Structural Disenfranchisement Erodes Democracy" November 7, 2001
- The Brennan Center and Professor Michael McDonald "Analysis of the September 15, 2005 Voting fraud Report Submitted to the New Jersey Attorney General," The Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law, December 2005.
- Democratic National Committee, "Democracy at Risk: The November 2004 Election in Ohio," DNC Services Corporation, 2005
- Public Integrity Section, Criminal Division, United States Department of Justice, "Report to Congress on the Activities and Operations of the Public Integrity Section for 2002."
- Public Integrity Section, Criminal Division, United States Department of Justice, "Report to Congress on the Activities and Operations of the Public Integrity Section for 2003."
- Public Integrity Section, Criminal Division, United States Department of Justice, "Report to Congress on the Activities and Operations of the Public Integrity Section for 2004."
- Craig Donsanto, "The Federal Crime of Election Fraud," Public Integrity Section, Department of Justice, prepared for Democracy.Ru, n.d., at [http://www.democracy.ru/english/library/international/eng\\_1999-11.html](http://www.democracy.ru/english/library/international/eng_1999-11.html)
- People for the American Way, Election Protection 2004, Election Protection Coalition, at <http://www.electionprotection2004.org/edaynews.htm>
- Craig Donsanto, "Prosecution of Electoral Fraud under United State Federal Law," *IFES Political Finance White Paper Series*, IFES, 2006.

- General Accounting Office, "Elections: Views of Selected Local Election Officials on Managing Voter Registration and Ensuring Eligible Citizens Can Vote," Report to Congressional Requesters, September 2005.
- Lori Minnite and David Callahan, "Securing the Vote: An Analysis of Election Fraud," Demos: A Network of Ideas and Action, 2003.
- People for the American Way, NAACP, Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, "Shattering the Myth: An Initial Snapshot of Voter Disenfranchisement in the 2004 Elections," December 2004.

#### Books

- John Fund, *Stealing Elections: How Voting fraud Threatens Our Democracy*, Encounter Books, 2004.
- Andrew Gumbel, *Steal this Vote: Dirty Elections and the Rotten History of Democracy in American*, Nation Books, 2005.
- Tracy Campbell, *Deliver the Vote: A History of Election Fraud, An American Political Tradition – 1742-2004*, Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2005.
- David E. Johnson and Jonny R. Johnson, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the White House: Foolhardiness, Folly, and Fraud in the Presidential Elections, from Andrew Jackson to George W. Bush*, Taylor Trade Publishing, 2004.
- Mark Crispin Miller, *Fooled Again*, Basic Books, 2005.

During our review of these documents, we learned a great deal about the type of research that has been conducted in the past concerning voting fraud and voter intimidation. None of the studies or reports was based on a comprehensive, nationwide study, survey or review of all allegations, prosecutions or convictions of state or federal crimes related to voting fraud or voter intimidation in the United States. Most reports focused on a limited number of case studies or instances of alleged voting fraud or intimidation. For example, "Shattering the Myth: An Initial Snapshot of Voter Disenfranchisement in the 2004 Elections," a report produced by the People for the American Way, focused exclusively on citizen reports of fraud or intimidation to the Election Protection program during the 2004 presidential election. Similarly, reports produced annually by the Department of Justice, Public Integrity Division, deal exclusively with crimes reported to and prosecuted by the United States Attorneys and/or the Department of Justice through the Public Integrity Section.

It is also apparent from a review of these articles and books that there is no consensus on the pervasiveness of voting fraud and voter intimidation. Some reports, such as

“Building Confidence in U.S. Elections,” suggest that there is little or no evidence of extensive fraud in U.S. elections or of multiple voting. This conflicts directly with other reports, such as the “Preliminary Findings of Joint Task Force Investigating Possible Election Fraud,” produced by the Milwaukee Police Department, Milwaukee County District Attorney’s Office, FBI and U.S. Attorney’s Office. That report cited evidence of more than 100 individual instances of suspected double-voting, voting in the name of persons who likely did not vote, and/or voting using a name believed to be fake.

Voter intimidation is also a topic of some debate because there is little agreement <sup>concerning</sup> ~~on~~ what constitutes actionable voter intimidation. Some studies and reports cover only intimidation that involves physical or financial threats, while others cover non-criminal intimidation, ~~even~~ legal practices, that allegedly cause vote suppression.

One point of agreement is that absentee voting and voter registration by nongovernmental groups create opportunities for fraud. <sup>including</sup> ~~For example,~~ a number of studies cited circumstances in which voter registration drives have falsified voter registration applications or have destroyed voter registration applications of persons affiliated with a certain political party. Others conclude that paying persons per voter registration application creates the opportunity and perhaps the incentive for fraud.

### Interviews with Experts

In addition to reviewing prior studies and reports on voting fraud and intimidation, EAC consultants interviewed a number of persons regarding their experiences and research of voting fraud and voter intimidation. Persons interviewed included:

**Wade Henderson**  
Executive Director,  
Leadership Conference for Civil Rights

**Wendy Weiser**  
Deputy Director,  
Democracy Program, The Brennan  
Center

**William Groth**  
Attorney for the plaintiffs in the Indiana  
voter identification litigation

**Lori Minnite**  
Barnard College, Columbia University

**Neil Bradley**  
ACLU Voting Rights Project

**Pat Rogers**  
Attorney, New Mexico

**Nina Perales**  
Counsel,  
Mexican American Legal Defense and  
Education Fund

**Rebecca Vigil-Giron**  
Secretary of State, New Mexico

**Sarah Ball Johnson**  
Executive Director,  
State Board of Elections, Kentucky

**Stephen Ansolobhere**  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

**Chandler Davidson**  
Rice University

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**Tracey Campbell**

Author, *Deliver the Vote*

**Douglas Webber**

Assistant Attorney General, Indiana

**Heather Dawn Thompson**

Director of Government Relations,  
National Congress of American Indians

**Jason Torchinsky**

Assistant General Counsel,  
American Center for Voting Rights

**Robin DeJarnette**

Executive Director,  
American Center for Voting Rights

**Harry Van Sickle**

Commissioner of Elections,  
Pennsylvania

**Tony Sirvello**

Executive Director  
International Association of Clerks,  
Recorders, Election Officials and  
Treasurers

**Joseph Sandler**

Counsel  
Democratic National Committee

**John Ravitz**

Executive Director  
New York City Board of Elections

**Sharon Priest**

Former Secretary of State, Arkansas

**Kevin Kennedy**

Executive Director  
State Board of Elections, Wisconsin

**Evelyn Stratton**

Justice  
Supreme Court of Ohio

**Joseph Rich**

Former Director  
Voting Section, Civil Rights Division  
U.S. Department of Justice

**Craig Donsanto**

Director, Public Integrity Section  
U.S. Department of Justice

**John Tanner**

Director  
Voting Section, Civil Rights Division  
U.S. Department of Justice

These interviews in large part confirmed the conclusions that were gleaned from the articles, reports and books that were analyzed. For example, the interviewees largely agreed that absentee balloting is subject to the greatest proportion of fraudulent acts, followed by vote buying and voter registration fraud. They similarly pointed to voter registration drives by nongovernmental groups as a source of fraud, particularly when the workers are paid per registration. Many asserted that impersonation of voters is probably the least frequent type of fraud because it was the most likely type of fraud to be discovered, the stiff penalties associated with this type of fraud, and ~~that~~ it is an inefficient method of influencing an election.

Interviewees differed on what they believe constitutes actionable voter intimidation. Law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies tend to look to the criminal definitions of voter intimidation, which generally require some threat of physical or financial harm. On the other hand, voter rights advocates tended to point to activities such as challenger laws,

voter identification laws, polling place locations, and distribution of voting machines as activities that can constitute voter intimidation.

Those interviewed also expressed opinions on the enforcement of voting fraud and voter intimidation laws. States have varying authorities to enforce these laws. In some states, enforcement is left to the county or district attorney, and in others enforcement is managed by the state's attorney general. Regardless, voting fraud and voter intimidation are difficult to prove and require resources and time that many local law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies do not have. Federal law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies have more time and resources but have limited jurisdiction and can only prosecute election crimes perpetrated in elections with a federal candidate on the ballot or perpetrated by a public official under the color of law. Those interviewed differed on the effectiveness of the current system of enforcement. Some allege that prosecutions are not sufficiently aggressive. Others feel that the current laws are sufficient for prosecuting fraud and intimidation.

A summary of the each of the interviews conducted is attached as Appendix "3".

### **Case Law and Statutes**

Consultants reviewed more than 40,000 cases that were identified using a series of search terms related to voting fraud and voter intimidation. The majority of these cases came from courts of appeal. This is not surprising, since most cases that are publicly reported come from courts of appeal. Very few cases that are decided at the district court level are reported for public review.

Very few of the identified cases were applicable to this study. Of those that were applicable, no apparent thematic pattern emerged. However, it did seem that the greatest number of cases reported on fraud and intimidation have shifted from past patterns of stealing votes to present problems with voter registration, voter identification, the proper delivery and counting of absentee and overseas ballots, provisional voting, vote buying, and challenges to felon eligibility.

A listing of the cases reviewed in this study is attached as Appendix "4".

### **Media Reports**

EAC consultants reviewed thousands of media reports concerning a wide variety of potential voting fraud or voter intimidation, including:

- absentee ballot fraud,
- voter registration fraud,
- voter intimidation and suppression,
- deceased voters,
- multiple voting,
- felons voting,

- non-citizens voting,
- vote buying,
- deceptive practices, and
- fraud by election officials.

While these reports showed that there were a large number of allegations of voting fraud and voter intimidation, they provided much less information as to whether the allegations were ever formalized as complaints to law enforcement, whether charges were filed, whether prosecutions ensued, and whether any convictions were made. The media reports were enlightening as to the pervasiveness of complaints of fraud and intimidation throughout the country, the correlation between fraud allegations and the perception that the state was a “battleground” or “swing” state, and the fact that there were reports of almost all types of voting fraud and voter intimidation. However, these reports do not provide much data for analysis as to the number of complaints, charges and prosecutions of voting fraud and intimidation throughout the country.

## DEFINITION OF ELECTION CRIMES

From our study of available information on voting fraud and voter intimidation, we have learned that these terms mean many things to many different people. These terms are used casually to refer to anything from vote buying to refusing to register a voter to falsifying voter registration applications. Upon further inspection, however, it is apparent that there is no common understanding or agreement of what constitutes “voting fraud” and “voter intimidation.” Some think of voting fraud and voter intimidation only as criminal acts, while others include actions that may constitute civil wrongs, civil rights violations, and even legal and appropriate activities. To arrive at a common definition and list of activities that can be studied, EAC assessed the appropriateness of the terminology that is currently in use and applied certain factors to limit the scope and reach of what can and will be studied by EAC in the future.

### New Terminology

The phrase “voting fraud” is really a misnomer for a concept that is much broader. “Fraud” is a concept that connotes an intentional act of deception, which may constitute either a criminal act or civil tort depending upon the willfulness of the act.

**Fraud**, n. 1. A knowing misrepresentation of the truth or concealment of a material fact to induce another to act to his or her detriment. • Fraud is usually a tort, but in some cases (esp. when the conduct is willful) it may be a crime. <sup>2</sup>

Black’s Law Dictionary, Eighth Edition, p. 685.

A “voter” is a person who is eligible to and engages in the act of voting. Black’s Law Dictionary, Eighth Edition, p. 1608. Using these terms, <sup>EAC defines</sup> ~~to form a definition of~~ “voting fraud,” it ~~means~~ <sup>2</sup> fraudulent or deceptive acts committed by the voter or in which the voter is the victim. Thus, a voter who intentionally provides false information on a voter

registration application or intentionally impersonates another registered voter and attempts to vote for that person would be committing “voting fraud.” Similarly, a person who knowingly provides false information to a voter about the location of the voter’s polling place commits fraud on the voter.

The phrase “voting fraud” does not capture a myriad of other criminal acts that are related to elections which are not perpetrated by the voter and/or do not involve an act of deception. For example, “voting fraud” does not capture actions or willful inaction by candidates and election workers. When an election official willfully and knowingly refuses to register to vote a legally eligible person it is a crime. This is a crime that involves neither the voter nor an act of deception.

To further complicate matters, the phrases “voting fraud” and “voter intimidation” are used to refer to actions or inactions that are criminal as well as those that are potentially civil wrongs and even those that are legal. Obviously, criminal acts and civil wrongs are pursued in a very different manner. Criminal acts are prosecuted by the local, state or federal government. Generally, civil wrongs are prosecuted by the individual who believes that they were harmed. In some cases, when civil rights are involved, the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice may become involved.

The goal of this study was to develop a common definition of what is generically referred to as “voting fraud” and “voter intimidation” that would serve as the basis for a future, comprehensive study of the existence of these problems. In order to meet that goal, we recognize that the current terminology does not accurately represent the spectrum of activities that we desire to study. Furthermore, we recognize that the resources, both financial and human capital, needed to study allegations and prosecutions of criminal acts, suits involving civil torts, and allegations of potential voter suppression through the use of legal election processes are well beyond the resources available to EAC. As such, EAC has defined “election crimes,” a phrase that captures all crimes related to the voter registration and voting processes.

### **The Definition of an Election Crime for Purposes of this Study**

Election crimes are intentional acts or willful failures to act, prohibited by state or federal law, that are designed to cause ineligible persons to participate in the election process; eligible persons to be excluded from the election process; ineligible votes to be cast in an election; eligible votes not to be cast or counted; or other interference with or invalidation of election results. Election crimes generally fall into one of four categories: acts of deception, acts of coercion, acts of damage or destruction, and failures or refusals to act.

Election crimes can be committed by voters, candidates, election officials, or any other members of the public who desire to criminally impact the result of an election. However, crimes that are based upon intentional or willful failure to act assume that a duty to act exists. Election officials have affirmative duties to act with regard to elections. By and large, other groups and individuals do not have such duties.

The victim of an election crime can be a voter, a group of voters, an election official, a candidate, or the public, in general. Election crimes can occur during any stage of the election process, including but not limited to, qualification of candidates; voter registration; campaigning; voting system preparation and programming; voting either early, absentee, or election day; vote tabulation; recounts; and recalls.

The following are examples of activities that may constitute election crimes. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but is representative of what states and the federal government consider criminal activity related to elections.

### *Acts of Deception*

- Knowingly causing to be mailed or distributed, or knowingly mailing or distributing, literature that includes false information about the voter's precinct or polling place, the date and time of the election or a candidate;
- Possessing an official ballot outside the voting location, unless the person is an election official or other person authorized by law or local ordinance to possess a ballot outside of the polling location;
- Making, or knowingly possessing, a counterfeit of an official election ballot;
- Signing a name other than his/her own to a petition proposing an initiative, referendum, recall, or nomination of a candidate for office;
- Knowingly signing more than once for the proposition, question, or candidate in one election;
- Signing a petition proposing an initiative or referendum when the signer is not a qualified voter.
- Voting or attempting to vote in the name of another person;
- Voting or attempting to vote more than once during the same election;
- Intentionally making a false affidavit, swearing falsely; or falsely affirming under an oath required by a statute regarding their voting status, including when registering to vote; requesting an absentee ballot or presenting to vote in person;
- Registering to vote without being entitled to register;
- Knowingly making a material false statement on an application for voter registration or re-registration; and
- Voting or attempting to vote in an election after being disqualified or when the person knows that he/she is not eligible to vote.

### *Acts of Coercion*

- Using, threatening to use, or causing to be used force, coercion, violence, restraint; or inflicting, threatening to inflict; or causing to be inflicted damage harm; or loss; upon or against another person to induce or compel that person to vote or refrain from voting or to register or refrain from registering to vote;
- Knowingly paying, offering to pay, or causing to be paid money or other thing of value to a person to vote or refrain from voting for a candidate or for or against an election proposition or question;

## DRAFT – DO NOT DISTRIBUTE

- Knowingly soliciting or encouraging a person who is not qualified to vote in an election;
- Knowingly challenging a person's right to vote without probable cause or on fraudulent grounds,' or engaging in mass, indiscriminate, and groundless challenging of voters solely for the purpose of preventing voter from voting or to delay the process of voting;
- As an employer, attempting by coercion, intimidation, threats to discharge or to lessen the remuneration of an employee, to influence his/her vote in any election, or who requires or demands an examination or inspection by himself/herself or another of an employee's ballot;
- Soliciting, accepting, or agreeing to accept money or other valuable thing in exchange for signing or refraining from signing a petition proposing an initiative;
- Inducing or attempting to induce an election official to fail in the official's duty by force, threat, intimidation, or offers of reward;
- Directly or through any other person advancing, paying, soliciting, or receiving or causing to be advanced, paid, solicited, or received, any money or other valuable consideration to or for the use of any person in order to induce a person not to become or to withdraw as a candidate for public office; and
- Soliciting, accepting, or agreeing to accept money or other thing of value in exchange for registering to vote.

### *Acts of Damage or Destruction*

- Destroying completed voter registration applications;
- Removing or destroying any of the supplies or other conveniences placed in the voting booths or compartments;
- Removing, tearing down, or defacing election materials, instructions or ballots;
- Fraudulently altering or changing the vote of any elector, by which such elector is prevented from voting as the person intended;
- Knowingly removing, altering, defacing or covering any political sign of any candidate for public office for a prescribed period prior to and following the election;
- Intentionally changing, attempting to change, or causing to be changed an official election document including ballots, tallies, and returns; and
- Intentionally delaying, attempting to delay, or causing to be delayed the sending of certificate, register, ballots, or other materials whether original or duplicate, required to be sent by jurisdictional law.

### *Failure or Refusal to Act*

- Intentionally failing to perform an election duty, or knowingly committing an unauthorized act with the intent to effect the election;
- Knowingly permitting, making, or attempting to make a false count of election returns;
- Intentionally concealing, withholding, or destroying election returns or attempts to do so;

- Marking a ballot by folding or physically altering the ballot so as to recognize the ballot at a later time;
- Attempting to learn or actually and unlawfully learning how a voter marked a ballot;
- Distributing or attempting to distribute election material knowing it to be fraudulent;
- Knowingly refusing to register a person who is entitled to register under the rules of that jurisdiction;
- Knowingly removing the eligibility status of a voter who is eligible to vote; and
- Knowingly refusing to allow an eligible voter to cast his/her ballot.

### **What is not an Election Crime for Purposes of this Study**

There are some actions or inactions that may constitute crimes or civil wrongs that we do not include in our definition of “election crimes.” All criminal or civil violations related to campaign finance contribution limitations, prohibitions, and reporting either at the state or federal level are not “election crimes” for purposes of this study and any future study conducted by EAC. Similarly, criminal acts that are unrelated to elections, voting, or voter registration are not “election crimes,” even when those offenses occur in a polling place, voter registration office, or a candidate’s office or appearance. For example, an assault or battery that results from a fight in a polling place or at a candidate’s office is not an election crime. Similarly, violations of ethical provisions such as the Hatch Act are not “election crimes,” and actions that do not rise to the level of criminal activity, such as a misdemeanor, relative felony or felony, are not “election crimes.”

## **RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO STUDY ELECTION CRIMES**

As a part of its study, EAC sought recommendations on ways that EAC can research the existence of election crimes. EAC consultants, the working groups and some of the persons interviewed as a part of this study provided the following recommendations.

### ***Recommendation 1: Conduct More Interviews***

Future activity in this area should include conducting additional interviews. In particular, more election officials from all levels of government, parts of the country, and political parties should be interviewed. It would also be especially beneficial to talk to law enforcement officials, specifically federal District Election Officers (“DEOs”) and local district attorneys, as well as civil and criminal defense attorneys.

### ***Recommendation 2: Follow Up on Media Research***

The media search conducted for this phase of the research was based on a list of search terms agreed upon by EAC consultants. Thousands of articles were reviewed and hundreds analyzed. Many of the articles contained allegations of fraud or intimidation. Similarly, some of the articles contained information about investigations into such

activities or even charges brought. Additional media research should be conducted to determine what, if any, resolutions or further activity there was in each case.

***Recommendation 3: Follow Up on Allegations Found in Literature Review***

Many of the allegations made in the reports and books that were analyzed and summarized by EAC consultants were not substantiated and were certainly limited by the date of publication of those pieces. Despite this, such reports and books are frequently cited by various interested parties as evidence of fraud or intimidation. Further research should include follow up on the allegations discovered in the literature review.

***Recommendation 4: Review Complaints Filed With “MyVote1” Voter Hotline***

During the 2004 election and the statewide elections of 2005, the University of Pennsylvania led a consortium of groups and researchers in conducting the MyVote1 Project. This project involved using a toll-free voter hotline that voters could call for poll locations, be transferred to a local hotline, or leave a recorded message with a complaint. In 2004, this resulted in more than 200,000 calls received and more than 56,000 recorded complaints.

Further research should be conducted using the MyVote1 data with the cooperation of the project leaders. While perhaps not a fully scientific survey given the self-selection of the callers, the information regarding 56,000 complaints may provide insight into the problems voters may have experienced, especially issues regarding intimidation or suppression.

***Recommendation 5: Further Review of Complaints Filed With U.S. Department of Justice***

According to a recent GAO report, the Voting Section of the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice has a variety of ways it tracks complaints of voter intimidation. Attempts should be made to obtain relevant data, including the telephone logs of complaints and information from the Interactive Case Management (ICM) system. Further research should also include a review and analysis of the DOJ/OPM observer and “monitor field reports” from Election Day.

***Recommendation 6: Review Reports Filed By District Election Officers***

Further research should include a review of the reports that must be filed by every District Election Officer to the Public Integrity Section of the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice. The DEOs play a central role in receiving reports of voting fraud and investigating and pursuing them. Their reports back to the Department would likely provide tremendous insight into what actually transpired during the last several elections. Where necessary, information could be redacted or made confidential.

***Recommendation 7: Attend Ballot Access and Voting Integrity Symposium***

Further activity in this area should include attending the next Ballot Access and Voting Integrity Symposium. At this conference, prosecutors serving as District Election Officers in the 94 U.S. Attorneys' Offices obtain annual training on fighting election fraud and voting rights abuses. These conferences are sponsored by the Voting Section of the Civil Rights Division and the Public Integrity Section of the Criminal Division, and feature presentations by Civil Rights officials and senior prosecutors from the Public Integrity Section and the U.S. Attorneys' Offices. By attending the symposium researchers could learn more about the following: how District Election Officers are trained; how information about previous election and voting issues is presented; and how the Voting Rights Act, the criminal laws governing election fraud and intimidation, the National Voter Registration Act, and the Help America Vote Act are described and explained to participants.

***Recommendation 8: Conduct Statistical Research***

EAC should measure voting fraud and intimidation using interviews, focus groups, and a survey and statistical analysis of the results of these efforts. The sample should be based on the following factors:

- Ten locations that are geographically and demographically diverse where there have been many reports of fraud and/or intimidation;
- Ten locations (geographically and demographically diverse) that have not had many reports of fraud and/or intimidation;

EAC should also conduct a survey of elections officials, district attorneys, and district election officers. The survey sample should be large in order to be able to get the necessary subsets, and it must include a random set of counties where there have and have not been a large number of allegations.

***Recommendation 9: Explore Improvements to Federal Law***

Future researchers should review federal law to explore ways to make it easier to impose either civil or criminal penalties for acts of intimidation that do not necessarily involve racial animus and/or a physical or economic threat.

***Recommendation 10: Use Observers to Collect Data on Election Day***

Use observers to collect data regarding fraud and intimidation at the polls on Election Day. There may be some limitations to the ability to conduct this type of research, including difficulty gaining access to polling places for the purposes of observation, and concerns regarding how the observers themselves may inadvertently or deliberately influence the occurrence of election crimes.

***Recommendation 11: Study Absentee Ballot Fraud***

Because absentee ballot fraud constitutes a large portion of election crimes, a stand-alone study of absentee ballot fraud should be conducted. Researchers should look at actual cases to see how absentee ballot fraud schemes are conducted in an effort to provide recommendations on more effective measures for preventing fraud when absentee ballots are used.

***Recommendation 12: Use Risk Analysis Methodology to Study Fraud***

Conduct an analysis of what types of fraud people are most likely to commit. Researchers will use that risk analysis to rank the types of fraud based on the “ease of commission” and the impact of the fraud.

***Recommendation 13: Conduct Research Using Database Comparisons***

Researchers should compare information on databases to determine whether the voter rolls contain deceased persons and felons. In addition, the voter rolls can then be compared with the list of persons who voted to determine whether a vote was recorded by someone who is deceased or if felons are noted as having voted.

***Recommendation 14: Conduct a Study of Deceptive Practices***

The working group discussed the increasing use of deceptive practices, such as flyers and phone calls with false and/or intimidating information, to suppress voter participation. A number of groups, such as the Department of Justice, the EAC, and organizations such as the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, keep phone logs regarding complaints of such practices. These logs should be reviewed and analyzed to see how and where such practices are being conducted and what can be done about them.

***Recommendation 15: Study Use of HAVA Administrative Complaint Procedure as Vehicle for Measuring Fraud and Intimidation***

EAC should study the extent to which states are utilizing the administrative complaint procedure mandated by HAVA. In addition, the EAC should study whether data collected through the administrative complaint procedure can be used as another source of information for measuring fraud and intimidation.

***Recommendation 16: Examine the Use of Special Election Courts***

Given that many state and local judges are elected, it may be worth exploring whether special election courts should be established to handle fraud and intimidation complaints before, during, and after Election Day. Pennsylvania employs such a system and could investigate how well that system is working.

### **Accepted Recommendations**

There has never been a comprehensive, national study that gathered data regarding all claims, charges, and prosecutions of voting crimes. EAC feels that a comprehensive study is the most important research that it can offer the election community and the public. As such, EAC has adopted all or a part of six of the 16 recommendations made by EAC consultants and the working group.

While several of the other recommendations could be used to obtain more anecdotal information regarding election crimes, EAC believes that what is needed is a comprehensive survey and study of the information available from investigatory agencies, prosecutorial bodies and courts on the number and types of complaints, charges and prosecutions of election crimes. Additional media reviews, additional interviews and the use of observers to collect information from voters on Election Day will only serve to continue the use of anecdotal data to report on election crimes. Hard data on complaints, charges and prosecutions exists and we should gather and use that data, rather than rely on the perceptions of the media or the members of the public as to what might be fraud or intimidation.

Some of the recommendations are beyond the scope of the current study. While election courts may be a reasonable conclusion to reach after we determine the volume and type of election crimes being reported, charged or prosecuted, it is premature to embark on an analysis of that solution without more information. Last, some of the recommendations do not support a comprehensive study of election crimes. While a risk analysis might be appropriate in a smaller scale study, EAC desires to conduct a broader survey to avoid the existing problem of anecdotal and limited scope of information.

In order to further its goal of developing a comprehensive data set regarding election crimes and the laws and procedures used to identify and prosecute them, EAC intends to engage in the following research activities in studying the existence and enforcement of election crimes:

#### ***Survey Chief Election Officers Regarding Administrative Complaints***

Likely sources of complaints concerning election crimes are the administrative complaint processes that states were required to establish to comply with Section 402 of HAVA. These complaint procedures were required to be in place prior to a state receiving any funds under HAVA. Citizens are permitted to file complaints alleging violations of HAVA Title III provisions under these procedures with the state's chief election official. Those complaints must be resolved within 60 days. The procedures also allow for alternative dispute resolution of claims. Some states have expanded this process to include complaints of other violations, such as election crimes.

In order to determine how many of these complaints allege the commission of election crimes, EAC will survey the states' chief election officers regarding complaints that have been filed, investigated, and resolved since January 1, 2004. EAC will use the definition

of election crimes provided above in this report in its survey so that data regarding a uniform set of offenses will be collected.

***Survey State Election Crime Investigation Units Regarding Complaints Filed and Referred***

Several chief state election officials have developed investigation units focused on receiving, investigating, and referring complaints of election crimes. These units were established to bolster the abilities of state and local law enforcement to investigate allegations of election crimes. California, New York and Florida are just three examples of states that have these types of units.

EAC will use a survey instrument to gather information on the numbers and types of complaints that have been received by, investigated, and ultimately referred to local or state law enforcement by election crime investigation units since January 1, 2004. These data will help us understand the pervasiveness of perceived fraud, as well as the number of claims that state election officials felt were meritorious of being referred to local and state law enforcement or prosecutorial agencies for further action.

***Survey Law Enforcement and Prosecutorial Agencies Regarding Complaints and Charge of Voting Crimes***

While voters, candidates and citizens may call national hotlines or the news media to report allegations of election crimes, it is those complaints that are made to law enforcement that can be investigated and ultimately prosecuted. Thus, it is critical to the study of election crimes to obtain statistics regarding the number and types of complaints that are made to law enforcement, how many of those complaints result in the perpetrator being charged or indicted, and how many of those charges or indictments result in pleas or convictions.

Thus, EAC will survey law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies at the local, state and federal level to determine the number and types of complaints, charges or indictments, and pleas or convictions of election crimes since January 1, 2004. In addition, EAC will seek to obtain an understanding of why some complaints are not charged or indicted and why some charges or indictments are not prosecuted.

***Analyze Survey Data in Light of State Laws and Procedures***

Once a reliable data set concerning the existence and enforcement of election crimes is assembled, a real analysis of the effectiveness of fraud prevention measures can be conducted. For example, data can be analyzed to determine if criminal activities related to elections are isolated to certain areas or regions of the country. Data collected from the election official surveys can be compared to the data regarding complaints, charges and prosecutions gathered from the respective law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies in each jurisdiction. The effect and/or effectiveness of provisions such as voter identification laws and challenger provisions can be assessed based on hard data from

areas where these laws exist. Last, analyses such as the effectiveness of enforcement can be conducted in light of the resources available to the effort.

## CONCLUSION

Election crimes are nothing new to our election process. The pervasiveness of these crimes and the fervor with which they have been enforced has created a great deal of debate among academics, election officials, and voters. Past studies of these issues have been limited in scope and some have been riddled with bias. These are issues that deserve comprehensive and nonpartisan review. EAC, through its clearinghouse role, will collect and analyze data on election crimes throughout the country. These data not only will tell us what types of election crimes are committed and where fraud exists, but also inform us of what factors impact the existence, prevention, and prosecution of election crimes.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) requires the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to study a host of topics, including “voting fraud” and “voter intimidation.” In 2005, EAC embarked on an initial review of the existing knowledge of voting fraud and voter intimidation. The goal of that study was to develop a working definition of “voting fraud” and “voter intimidation” and to identify research methodology to conduct a comprehensive, nationwide study of these topics.

EAC staff along with two, bipartisan consultants reviewed the existing information available about voting fraud and voter intimidation, including reading articles, books and reports; interviewing subject matter experts; reviewing media reports of fraud and intimidation; and studying reported cases of prosecutions of these types of crimes. It is clear from this review that there is a great deal of debate on the pervasiveness of fraud in elections as well as what constitute the most common acts of fraud or intimidation. There is also no apparent consensus on the meaning of the phrases “voting fraud” and “voter intimidation.” Some think of voting fraud and voter intimidation only as criminal acts, while others include actions that may constitute civil wrongs, civil rights violations, and even legal activities.

In order to facilitate future study of these topics, EAC developed a working definition of “election crimes.” “Election crimes” are intentional acts or willful failures to act, prohibited by state or federal law, that are designed to cause ineligible persons to participate in the election process; eligible persons to be excluded from the election process; ineligible votes to be cast in an election; eligible votes not to be cast or counted; or other interference with or invalidation of election results. Election crimes generally fall into one of four categories: acts of deception, acts of coercion, acts of damage or destruction, and failures or refusals to act.

From EAC’s review of existing information on the issue, it was apparent that there have been a number of studies that touched on various topics and regions of the country concerning voting fraud and intimidation, but that there had never been a comprehensive, nationwide study of these topics. EAC will conduct further research to provide a comprehensive, nationwide look at “election crimes.” Future EAC study of this topic will focus on election-related, criminal activity and will not include acts that are exclusively civil wrongs, campaign finance violations, and violations of ethical provisions. EAC will study these concepts by surveying the states’ chief election officials about complaints they received through their administrative complaint processes, election crime investigation units regarding complaints received and those referred to law enforcement, and law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies regarding complaints received and charges filed.

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## INTRODUCTION

Voting fraud and voter intimidation are phrases familiar to many voting-aged Americans. However, they mean different things to different people. Voting fraud and voter intimidation are phrases used to refer to crimes, civil rights violations, and, at times, even the lawful application of state or federal laws to the voting process. Past study of these topics has been as varied as its perceived meaning. In an effort to help understand the realities of voting fraud and voter intimidation in our elections, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) has begun this, phase one, of a comprehensive study on election crimes. In this phase of its examination, EAC has developed a working definition of election crimes and adopted research methodology on how to assess the existence and enforcement of election crimes in the United States.

## PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE EAC STUDY

Section 241 of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) calls on the EAC to research and study various issues related to the administration of elections. During Fiscal Year 2006, EAC began projects to research several of the listed topics. These topics for research were chosen in consultation with the EAC Standards Board and Board of Advisors. Voting fraud and voter intimidation are topics that the EAC as well as its advisory boards felt were important to study to help improve the administration of elections for federal office.

*italics*  
EAC began this study with the intention of identifying a common understanding of voting fraud and voter intimidation and devising a plan for a comprehensive study of these issues. The initial study was not intended to be a comprehensive review of existing voting fraud and voter intimidation actions, laws, or prosecutions. To conduct that type of extensive research, a basic understanding had to first be established regarding what is commonly referred to as voting fraud and voter intimidation. Once that understanding was reached, a definition had to be crafted to refine and in some cases limit the scope of what reasonably can be researched and studied as evidence of voting fraud and voter intimidation. That definition will serve as the basis for recommending a plan for a comprehensive study of the area.

To accomplish these tasks, EAC employed two consultants, Job Serebrov and Tova Wang,<sup>1</sup> who worked with EAC staff and interns to conduct the research that forms the basis of this report. The consultants were chosen based upon their experience with the topic and the need to assure a bipartisan representation in this study. The consultants and EAC staff were charged with (1) researching the current state of information on the topic

<sup>1</sup> Biographies for Job Serebrov and Tova Wang, the two consultants hired by EAC, are attached as Appendix "1".



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of voting fraud and voter intimidation; (2) developing a uniform definition of voting fraud and voter intimidation; and (3) proposing recommended strategies for researching this subject.

EAC consultants reviewed existing studies, articles, reports and case law on voting fraud and intimidation and conducted interviews with experts in the field. EAC consultants and staff then presented their initial findings to a working group that provided feedback. The working group participants were:

**The Honorable Todd Rokita**  
Indiana Secretary of State  
Member, EAC Standards Board and the  
Executive Board of the Standards Board

**Kathy Rogers**  
Georgia Director of Elections, Office of  
the Secretary of State  
Member, EAC Standards Board

**J.R. Perez**  
Guadalupe County Elections  
Administrator, Texas

**Barbara Arnwine**  
Executive Director, Lawyers Committee  
for Civil Rights under Law  
Leader of Election Protection Coalition

**Benjamin L. Ginsberg**  
Partner, Patton Boggs LLP  
Counsel to National Republican  
Campaign Committees and Republican  
candidates

**Robert Bauer**  
Chair of the Political Law Practice at the  
law firm of Perkins Coie, District of  
Columbia  
National Counsel for Voter Protection,  
Democratic National Committee

**Mark (Thor) Hearne II**  
Partner-Member, Lathrop & Gage, St  
Louis, Missouri  
National Counsel to the American  
Center for Voting Rights

**Barry Weinberg**  
Former Deputy Chief and Acting Chief,  
Voting Section, Civil Rights Division,  
U.S. Department of Justice

*Technical Advisor:*

**Craig Donsanto**  
Director, Election Crimes Branch, U.S.  
Department of Justice

Throughout the process, EAC staff assisted the consultants by providing statutes and cases on this subject as well as supervision on the direction, scope and product of this research.

The consultants drafted a report for EAC that included their summaries of relevant cases, studies and reports on voting fraud and voter intimidation as well as summaries of the interviews that they conducted. The draft report also provided a definition of voting fraud and intimidation and made certain recommendations developed by the consultants

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or by the working group on how to pursue further study of this subject. This document was vetted and edited by EAC staff to produce this final report.

## **EXISTING INFORMATION ABOUT FRAUD AND INTIMIDATION**

To begin our study of voting fraud and voter intimidation, EAC consultants reviewed the current body of information on voting fraud and voter intimidation. The information available about these issues comes largely from a very limited body of reports, articles, and books. There are volumes of case law and statutes in the various states that also impact our understanding of what actions or inactions are legally considered fraud or intimidation. Last, there is anecdotal information available through media reports and interviews with persons who have administered elections, prosecuted fraud, and studied these problems. All of these resources were used by EAC consultants to provide an introductory look at the available knowledge of voting fraud and voter intimidation.

### **Reports and Studies of Voting fraud and Intimidation**

Over the years, there <sup>has?</sup> been a number of studies conducted and reports published about voting fraud and voter intimidation. EAC reviewed many of these studies and reports to develop a base-line understanding of the information that is currently available about voting fraud and voter intimidation. EAC consultants reviewed the following articles, reports and books, summaries of which are available in Appendix "2":

#### **Articles and Reports**

- People for the American Way and the NAACP, "The Long Shadow of Jim Crow," December 6, 2004.
- Laughlin McDonald, "The New Poll Tax," *The American Prospect* vol. 13 no. 23, December 30, 2002.
- Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau, "An Evaluation: Voter Registration Elections Board" Report 05-12, September, 2005.
- Milwaukee Police Department, Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office, Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Attorney's Office "Preliminary Findings of Joint Task Force Investigating Possible Election Fraud," May 10, 2005.
- National Commission on Federal Election Reform, "Building Confidence in U.S. Elections," Center for Democracy and Election Management, American University, September 2005.

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- The Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law and Spencer Overton, Commissioner and Law Professor at George Washington University School of Law "Response to the Report of the 2005 Commission on Federal Election Reform," September 19, 2005.
- Chandler Davidson, Tanya Dunlap, Gale Kenny, and Benjamin Wise, "Republican Ballot Security Programs: Vote Protection or Minority Vote Suppression – or Both?" A Report to the Center for Voting Rights & Protection, September, 2004.
- Alec Ewald, "A Crazy Quilt of Tiny Pieces: State and Local Administration of American Criminal Disenfranchisement Law," The Sentencing Project, November 2005.
- American Center for Voting Rights "Vote Fraud, Intimidation and Suppression in the 2004 Presidential Election," August 2, 2005.
- The Advancement Project, "America's Modern Poll Tax: How Structural Disenfranchisement Erodes Democracy" November 7, 2001
- The Brennan Center and Professor Michael McDonald "Analysis of the September 15, 2005 Voting fraud Report Submitted to the New Jersey Attorney General," The Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law, December 2005.
- Democratic National Committee, "Democracy at Risk: The November 2004 Election in Ohio," DNC Services Corporation, 2005
- Public Integrity Section, Criminal Division, United States Department of Justice, "Report to Congress on the Activities and Operations of the Public Integrity Section for 2002."
- Public Integrity Section, Criminal Division, United States Department of Justice, "Report to Congress on the Activities and Operations of the Public Integrity Section for 2003."
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- People for the American Way, Election Protection 2004, Election Protection Coalition, at <http://www.electionprotection2004.org/edaynews.htm>
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- Tracy Campbell, *Deliver the Vote: A History of Election Fraud, An American Political Tradition – 1742-2004*, Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2005.
- David E. Johnson and Jonny R. Johnson, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the White House: Foolhardiness, Folly, and Fraud in the Presidential Elections, from Andrew Jackson to George W. Bush*, Taylor Trade Publishing, 2004.
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During our review of these documents, we learned a great deal about the type of research that has been conducted in the past concerning voting fraud and voter intimidation. None of the studies or reports was based on a comprehensive, nationwide study, survey or review of all allegations, prosecutions or convictions of state or federal crimes related to voting fraud or voter intimidation in the United States. Most reports focused on a limited number of case studies or instances of alleged voting fraud or voter intimidation. For example, "Shattering the Myth: An Initial Snapshot of Voter Disenfranchisement in the 2004 Elections," a report produced by the People for the American Way, focused exclusively on citizen reports of fraud or intimidation to the Election Protection program during the 2004 Presidential election. Similarly, reports produced annually by the Department of Justice, Public Integrity Division, deal exclusively with crimes reported to and prosecuted by the United States Attorneys and/or the Department of Justice through the Public Integrity Section.

It is also apparent from a review of these articles and books that there is no consensus on the pervasiveness of voting fraud and voter intimidation. Some reports, such as "Building Confidence in U.S. Elections," suggest that there is little or no evidence of extensive fraud in U.S. elections or of multiple voting. This conflicts directly with other reports, such as the "Preliminary Findings of Joint Task Force Investigating Possible Election Fraud," produced by the Milwaukee Police Department, Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office, FBI and U.S. Attorney's Office. That report cited evidence of more than 100 individual instances of suspected double-voting, voting in the name of persons who likely did not vote, and/or voting using a name believed to be fake.

Voter intimidation is also a topic of some debate because there is little agreement concerning what constitutes actionable voter intimidation. Some studies and reports cover only intimidation that involves physical or financial threats, while others cover non-criminal intimidation, including legal practices that allegedly cause vote suppression.

One point of agreement is that absentee voting and voter registration by nongovernmental groups create opportunities for fraud. For example, a number of studies cited circumstances in which voter registration drives have falsified voter registration applications or have destroyed voter registration applications of persons affiliated with a certain political party. Others conclude that paying persons per voter registration application creates the opportunity and perhaps the incentive for fraud.

### **Interviews with Experts**

In addition to reviewing prior studies and reports on voting fraud and intimidation, EAC consultants interviewed a number of persons regarding their experiences and research of voting fraud and voter intimidation. Persons interviewed included:



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**Wade Henderson**  
Executive Director,  
Leadership Conference for Civil Rights

**Wendy Weiser**  
Deputy Director,  
Democracy Program, The Brennan  
Center

**William Groth**  
Attorney for the plaintiffs in the Indiana  
voter identification litigation

**Lori Minnite**  
Barnard College, Columbia University

**Neil Bradley**  
ACLU Voting Rights Project

**Pat Rogers**  
Attorney, New Mexico

**Nina Perales**  
Counsel,  
Mexican American Legal Defense and  
Education Fund

**Rebecca Vigil-Giron**  
Secretary of State, New Mexico

**Sarah Ball Johnson**  
Executive Director,  
State Board of Elections, Kentucky

**Stephen Ansolobhere**  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

**Chandler Davidson**  
Rice University

**Tracey Campbell**  
Author, *Deliver the Vote*

**Douglas Webber**  
Assistant Attorney General, Indiana

**Heather Dawn Thompson**  
Director of Government Relations,  
National Congress of American Indians

**Jason Torchinsky**  
Assistant General Counsel,  
American Center for Voting Rights

**Robin DeJarnette**  
Executive Director,  
American Center for Voting Rights

**Harry Van Sickle**  
Commissioner of Elections,  
Pennsylvania

**Tony Sirvello**  
Executive Director  
International Association of Clerks,  
Recorders, Election Officials and  
Treasurers

**Joseph Sandler**  
Counsel  
Democratic National Committee

**John Ravitz**  
Executive Director  
New York City Board of Elections

**Sharon Priest**  
Former Secretary of State, Arkansas

**Kevin Kennedy**  
Executive Director  
State Board of Elections, Wisconsin



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**Evelyn Stratton**  
Justice  
Supreme Court of Ohio

**Craig Donsanto**  
Director, Public Integrity Section  
U.S. Department of Justice

**Joseph Rich**  
Former Director  
Voting Section, Civil Rights Division  
U.S. Department of Justice

**John Tanner**  
Chief  
Voting Section, Civil Rights Division  
U.S. Department of Justice

These interviews in large part confirmed the conclusions that were gleaned from the articles, reports and books that were analyzed. For example, the interviewees largely agreed that absentee balloting is subject to the greatest proportion of fraudulent acts, followed by vote buying and voter registration fraud. They similarly pointed to voter registration drives by nongovernmental groups as a source of fraud, particularly when the workers are paid per registration. Many asserted that impersonation of voters is probably the least frequent type of fraud because it is the most likely type of fraud to be discovered, there are stiff penalties associated with this type of fraud, and it is an inefficient method of influencing an election.

Interviewees differed on what they believe constitutes actionable voter intimidation. Law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies tend to look to the criminal definitions of voter intimidation, which generally require some threat of physical or financial harm. On the other hand, voter rights advocates tended to point to activities such as challenger laws, voter identification laws, polling place locations, and distribution of voting machines as activities that can constitute voter intimidation.

Those interviewed also expressed opinions on the enforcement of voting fraud and voter intimidation laws. States have varying authorities to enforce these laws. In some states, enforcement is left to the county or district attorney, and in others enforcement is managed by the state's attorney general. Regardless, voting fraud and voter intimidation are difficult to prove and require resources and time that many local law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies do not have. Federal law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies have more time and resources but have limited jurisdiction and can only prosecute election crimes perpetrated in elections with a federal candidate on the ballot or perpetrated by a public official under the color of law. Those interviewed differed on the effectiveness of the current system of enforcement. Some allege that prosecutions are not sufficiently aggressive. Others feel that the current laws are sufficient for prosecuting fraud and intimidation.

A summary of the each of the interviews conducted is attached as Appendix "3".

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## Case Law and Statutes

Consultants reviewed more than 40,000 cases that were identified using a series of search terms related to voting fraud and voter intimidation. The majority of these cases came from courts of appeal. This is not surprising, since most cases that are publicly reported come from courts of appeal. Very few cases that are decided at the district court level are reported for public review.

Very few of the identified cases were applicable to this study. Of those that were applicable, no apparent thematic pattern emerged. However, it did seem that the greatest number of cases reported on fraud and intimidation have shifted from past patterns of stealing votes to present problems with voter registration, voter identification, the proper delivery and counting of absentee and overseas ballots, provisional voting, vote buying, and challenges to felon eligibility.

A listing of the cases reviewed in this study is attached as Appendix "4".

## Media Reports

EAC consultants reviewed thousands of media reports concerning a wide variety of potential voting fraud or voter intimidation, including:

- absentee ballot fraud,
- voter registration fraud,
- voter intimidation and suppression,
- deceased voters on voter registration list and/or voting,
- multiple voting,
- felon voting,
- non-citizens voting,
- vote buying,
- deceptive practices, and
- fraud by election officials.

While these reports showed that there were a large number of allegations of voting fraud and voter intimidation, they provided much less information as to whether the allegations were ever formalized as complaints to law enforcement, whether charges were filed, whether prosecutions ensued, and whether any convictions were made. The media reports were enlightening as to the pervasiveness of complaints of fraud and intimidation throughout the country, the correlation between fraud allegations and the perception that the state was a "battleground" or "swing" state, and the fact that there were reports of almost all types of voting fraud and voter intimidation. However, these reports do not



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provide much data for analysis as to the number of complaints, charges and prosecutions of voting fraud and intimidation throughout the country.

## DEFINITION OF ELECTION CRIMES

From our study of available information on voting fraud and voter intimidation, we have learned that these terms mean many things to many different people. These terms are used casually to refer to anything from vote buying to refusing to register a voter to falsifying voter registration applications. Upon further inspection, however, it is apparent that there is no common understanding or agreement of what constitutes "voting fraud" and "voter intimidation." Some think of voting fraud and voter intimidation only as criminal acts, while others include actions that may constitute civil wrongs, civil rights violations, and even legal activities. To arrive at a common definition and list of activities that can be studied, EAC assessed the appropriateness of the terminology that is currently in use and applied certain factors to limit the scope and reach of what can and will be studied by EAC in the future. As a result, EAC has adopted the use of the term "election crimes" for its future study.

### Current Terminology

The phrase "voting fraud" is really a misnomer for a concept that is much broader. "Fraud" is a concept that connotes an intentional act of deception, which may constitute either a criminal act or civil tort depending upon the willfulness of the act.

**Fraud, n. 1.** A knowing misrepresentation of the truth or concealment of a material fact to induce another to act to his or her detriment. • Fraud is usu[ally] a tort, but in some cases (esp. when the conduct is willful) it may be a crime.

Black's Law Dictionary, Eighth Edition, p. 685.

"Voting" is the act of casting votes to decide an issue or contest. Black's Law Dictionary, Eighth Edition, p. 1608. Using these terms to form a definition of "voting fraud," it means fraudulent or deceptive acts committed to influence the act of voting. Thus, a voter who intentionally impersonates another registered voter and attempts to vote for that person would be committing "voting fraud." Similarly, a person who knowingly provides false information to a voter about the location of the voter's polling place commits fraud on the voter.

The phrase "voting fraud" does not capture a myriad of other criminal acts that are related to elections which are not related to the act of voting and/or do not involve an act of deception. For example, "voting fraud" does not capture actions or willful inaction in the voter registration process. When an election official willfully and knowingly refuses



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to register to vote a legally eligible person it is a crime. This is a crime that involves neither the act of voting nor an act of deception.

To further complicate matters, the phrases "voting fraud" and "voter intimidation" are used to refer to actions or inactions that are criminal as well as those that are potentially civil wrongs and even those that are legal. Obviously, criminal acts and civil wrongs are pursued in a very different manner. Criminal acts are prosecuted by the local, state or federal government. Generally, civil wrongs are prosecuted by the individual who believes that they were harmed. In some cases, when civil rights are involved, the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice may become involved.

### New Terminology

The goal of this study was to develop a common definition of what is generically referred to as "voting fraud" and "voter intimidation" that would serve as the basis for a future, comprehensive study of the existence of these problems. Because the current terminology has such a variety of applications and meanings, "voting fraud" and "voter intimidation" can be read to encompass almost any bad act associated with an election. Such broad terminology is not useful in setting the boundaries of a future study. A definition must set parameters for future study by applying limitations on what is included in the concepts to be studied. The current terminology applies no such limitations.

Thus, EAC has adopted the use of the phrase "election crimes" to limit the scope of its future study. This term captures all crimes related to the voter registration and voting processes and excludes civil wrongs and non-election related crimes. EAC adopted this definition because it better represents the spectrum of activities that we are able to and desire to study. In addition, we recognize that the resources, both financial and human capital, needed to study all "voting fraud" and "voter intimidation," including criminal acts, civil actions, as well as allegations of voter suppression through the use of legal election processes are well beyond the resources available to EAC. Finally, by limiting this definition to criminal acts, EAC can focus its study on a set of more readily measurable data. Criminal behavior is readily defined through state and federal statutes and is prosecuted by government agencies. This is not the case with civil matters. Civil actions can be prosecuted by individuals and/or government entities. Furthermore, what constitutes civil action is far less defined, subject to change, and can vary from case to case. A more complete discussion of the concept of "election crimes" follows along with a list of excluded actions.

activities that EAC does not define as . . . . .



## The Definition of an Election Crime for Purposes of this Study

Election crimes are intentional acts or willful failures to act, prohibited by state or federal law, that are designed to cause ineligible persons to participate in the election process; eligible persons to be excluded from the election process; ineligible votes to be cast in an election; eligible votes not to be cast or counted; or other interference with or invalidation of election results. Election crimes generally fall into one of four categories: acts of deception, acts of coercion, acts of damage or destruction, and failures or refusals to act.

Election crimes can be committed by voters, candidates, election officials, or any other members of the public who desire to criminally impact the result of an election. However, crimes that are based upon intentional or willful failure to act assume that a duty to act exists. Election officials have affirmative duties to act with regard to elections. By and large, other groups and individuals do not have such duties.

The victim of an election crime can be a voter, a group of voters, an election official, a candidate, or the public in general. Election crimes can occur during any stage of the election process, including but not limited to qualification of candidates; voter registration; campaigning; voting system preparation and programming; voting either early, absentee, or on election day; vote tabulation; recounts; and recalls.

The following are examples of activities that may constitute election crimes. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but is representative of what states and the federal government consider criminal activity related to elections.

### *Acts of Deception*

- Knowingly causing to be mailed or distributed, or knowingly mailing or distributing, literature that includes false information about the voter's precinct or polling place, the date and time of the election or a candidate;
- Possessing an official ballot outside the voting location, unless the person is an election official or other person authorized by law or local ordinance to possess a ballot outside of the polling location;
- Making or knowingly possessing a counterfeit of an official election ballot;
- Signing a name other than his/her own to a petition proposing an initiative, referendum, recall, or nomination of a candidate for office;
- Knowingly signing more than once for the proposition, question, or candidate in one election;
- Signing a petition proposing an initiative or referendum when the signer is not a qualified voter.
- Voting or attempting to vote in the name of another person;
- Voting or attempting to vote more than once during the same election;



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- Intentionally making a false affidavit, swearing falsely, or falsely affirming under an oath required by a statute regarding their voting status, including when registering to vote, requesting an absentee ballot or presenting to vote in person;
- Registering to vote without being entitled to register;
- Knowingly making a materially false statement on an application for voter registration or re-registration; and
- Voting or attempting to vote in an election after being disqualified or when the person knows that he/she is not eligible to vote.

**Acts of Coercion**

- Using, threatening to use, or causing [to be used] <sup>the use of?</sup> force, coercion, violence, restraint, or inflicting, threatening to inflict, or causing to be inflicted damage, harm, or loss, upon or against another person to induce or compel that person to vote or refrain from voting or to register or refrain from registering to vote;
- Knowingly paying, offering to pay, or causing to be paid money or other thing <sup>of</sup> value to a person to vote or refrain from voting for a candidate or for or against an election proposition or question;
- Knowingly soliciting or encouraging a person who is not qualified to vote in an election;
- Knowingly challenging a person's right to vote without probable cause or on fraudulent grounds, or engaging in mass, indiscriminate, and groundless challenging of voters solely for the purpose of preventing voter from voting or to delay the process of voting;
- As an employer, attempting by coercion, intimidation, threats to discharge or to lessen the remuneration of an employee, to influence his/her vote in any election, or who requires or demands an examination or inspection by himself/herself or another of an employee's ballot;
- Soliciting, accepting, or agreeing to accept money or other valuable thing <sup>in</sup> exchange for signing or refraining from signing a petition proposing an initiative;
- Inducing or attempting to induce an election official to fail in the official's duty by force, threat, intimidation, or offers of reward;
- Directly or through any other person advancing, paying, soliciting, or receiving or causing to be advanced, paid, solicited, or received, any money or other valuable consideration to or for the use of any person in order to induce a person not to become or to withdraw as a candidate for public office; and
- Soliciting, accepting, or agreeing to accept money or other thing <sup>of</sup> value in exchange for registering to vote.



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### *Acts of Damage or Destruction*

- Destroying completed voter registration applications;
- Removing or destroying any of the supplies or other conveniences placed in the voting booths or compartments;
- Removing, tearing down, or defacing election materials, instructions or ballots;
- Fraudulently altering or changing the vote of any elector, by which such elector is prevented from voting as the person intended;
- Knowingly removing, altering, defacing or covering any political sign of any candidate for public office for a prescribed period prior to and following the election;
- Intentionally changing, attempting to change, or causing to be changed an official election document including ballots, tallies, and returns; and
- Intentionally delaying, attempting to delay, or causing to be delayed the sending of certificate, register, ballots, or other materials whether original or duplicate, required to be sent by jurisdictional law.

### *Failure or Refusal to Act*

- Intentionally failing to perform an election duty, or knowingly committing an unauthorized act with the intent to effect the election;
- Knowingly permitting, making, or attempting to make a false count of election returns;
- Intentionally concealing, withholding, or destroying election returns or attempts to do so;
- Marking a ballot by folding or physically altering the ballot so as to recognize the ballot at a later time;
- Attempting to learn or actually and unlawfully learning how a voter marked a ballot;
- Distributing or attempting to distribute election material knowing it to be fraudulent;
- Knowingly refusing to register a person who is entitled to register under the rules of that jurisdiction;
- Knowingly removing the eligibility status of a voter who is eligible to vote; and
- Knowingly refusing to allow an eligible voter to cast his/her ballot.

### **What is not an Election Crime for Purposes of this Study**

There are some actions or inactions that may constitute crimes or civil wrongs that we do not include in our definition of "election crimes." All criminal or civil violations related to campaign finance contribution limitations, prohibitions, and reporting either at the state or federal level are not "election crimes" for purposes of this study and any future



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study conducted by EAC. Similarly, criminal acts that are unrelated to elections, voting, or voter registration are not "election crimes," even when those offenses occur in a polling place, voter registration office, or a candidate's office or appearance. For example, an assault or battery that results from a fight in a polling place or at a candidate's office is not an election crime. Last, violations of ethical provisions and the Hatch Act are not "election crimes." Similarly, civil or other wrongs that do not rise to the level of criminal activity (i.e., a misdemeanor, relative felony or felony) are not "election crimes."

## RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO STUDY ELECTION CRIMES

As a part of its study, EAC sought recommendations on ways that EAC can research the existence of election crimes. EAC consultants, the working groups and some of the persons interviewed as a part of this study provided the following recommendations.

### *Recommendation 1: Conduct More Interviews*

Future activity in this area should include conducting additional interviews. In particular, more election officials from all levels of government, parts of the country, and political parties should be interviewed. It would also be especially beneficial to talk to law enforcement officials, specifically federal District Election Officers ("DEOs") and local district attorneys, as well as civil and criminal defense attorneys.

### *Recommendation 2: Follow Up on Media Research*

The media search conducted for this phase of the research was based on a list of search terms agreed upon by EAC consultants. Thousands of articles were reviewed and hundreds analyzed. Many of the articles contained allegations of fraud or intimidation. Similarly, some of the articles contained information about investigations into such activities or even charges brought. Additional media research should be conducted to determine what, if any, resolutions or further activity there was in each case.

### *Recommendation 3: Follow Up on Allegations Found in Literature Review*

Many of the allegations made in the reports and books that were analyzed and summarized by EAC consultants were not substantiated and were ~~certainly~~ limited by the date of publication of those pieces. Despite this, such reports and books are frequently cited by various interested parties as evidence of fraud or intimidation. Further research should include follow up on the allegations ~~discovered~~ in the literature review.

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***Recommendation 4: Review Complaints Filed With "MyVote1" Voter Hotline***

During the 2004 election and the statewide elections of 2005, the University of Pennsylvania led a consortium of groups and researchers in conducting the MyVote1 Project. This project involved using a toll-free voter hotline that voters could call for poll locations, be transferred to a local hotline, or leave a recorded message with a complaint. In 2004, this resulted in more than 200,000 calls received and more than 56,000 recorded complaints. *could*

Further research should be conducted using the MyVote1 data with the cooperation of the project leaders. While perhaps not a fully scientific survey given the self-selection of the callers, the information regarding 56,000 complaints may provide insight into the problems voters may have experienced, especially issues regarding intimidation or suppression. *could*

***Recommendation 5: Further Review of Complaints Filed With U.S. Department of Justice***

According to a recent GAO report, the Voting Section of the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice has a variety of ways it tracks complaints of voter intimidation. Attempts should be made to obtain relevant data, including the telephone logs of complaints and information from the Interactive Case Management (ICM) system. Further research should also include a review and analysis of the DOJ/OPM observer and "monitor field reports" from Election Day.

***Recommendation 6: Review Reports Filed By District Election Officers***

Further research *(DEO)* should include a review of the reports that must be filed by every District Election Officer to the Public Integrity Section of the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice. The DEOs play a central role in receiving reports of voting fraud and investigating and pursuing them. Their reports back to the Department would likely provide tremendous insight into what actually transpired during the last several elections. Where necessary, information could be redacted or made confidential. *Spell out necessary?*

***Recommendation 7: Attend Ballot Access and Voting Integrity Symposium***

Further activity in this area should include attending the next Ballot Access and Voting Integrity Symposium. At this conference, prosecutors serving as District Election Officers in the 94 U.S. Attorneys' Offices obtain annual training on fighting election fraud and voting rights abuses. These conferences are sponsored by the Voting Section of the Civil Rights Division and the Public Integrity Section of the Criminal Division, and feature presentations by Civil Rights officials and senior prosecutors from the Public



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Integrity Section and the U.S. Attorneys' Offices. By attending the symposium researchers could learn more about the following: how District Election Officers are trained; how information about previous election and voting issues is presented; and how the Voting Rights Act, the criminal laws governing election fraud and intimidation, the National Voter Registration Act, and the Help America Vote Act are described and explained to participants.

***Recommendation 8: Conduct Statistical Research***

EAC should measure voting fraud and intimidation using interviews, focus groups, and a survey and statistical analysis of the results of these efforts. The sample should be based on the following factors:

- Ten locations that are geographically and demographically diverse where there have been many reports of fraud and/or intimidation;
- Ten locations (geographically and demographically diverse) that have not had many reports of fraud and/or intimidation;

EAC should also conduct a survey of elections officials, district attorneys, and district election officers. The survey sample should be large in order to be able to get the necessary subsets, and it must include a random set of counties where there have and have not been a large number of allegations.

*Relics*

***Recommendation 9: Explore Improvements to Federal Law***

Future researchers should review federal law to explore ways to make it easier to impose either civil or criminal penalties for acts of intimidation that do not necessarily involve racial animus and/or a physical or economic threat.

***Recommendation 10: Use Observers to Collect Data on Election Day***

Use observers to collect data regarding fraud and intimidation at the polls on Election Day. There may be some limitations to the ability to conduct this type of research, including difficulty gaining access to polling places for the purposes of observation, and concerns regarding how the observers themselves may inadvertently or deliberately influence the occurrence of election crimes.

***Recommendation 11: Study Absentee Ballot Fraud***

~~Because~~ *Therefore,* absentee ballot fraud constitutes a large portion of election crimes, a stand-alone study of absentee ballot fraud should be conducted. Researchers should look at actual cases to see how absentee ballot fraud schemes are conducted in an effort to provide



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recommendations on more effective measures for preventing fraud when absentee ballots are used.

***Recommendation 12: Use Risk Analysis Methodology to Study Fraud***

Conduct an analysis of what types of fraud people are most likely to commit. Researchers will use that risk analysis to rank the types of fraud based on the "ease of commission" and the impact of the fraud.

***Recommendation 13: Conduct Research Using Database Comparisons***

Researchers should compare information on databases to determine whether the voter rolls contain deceased persons and felons. In addition, the voter rolls can then be compared with the list of persons who voted to determine whether a vote was recorded by someone who is deceased or if felons are noted as having voted.

***Recommendation 14: Conduct a Study of Deceptive Practices***

The working group discussed the increasing use of deceptive practices, such as flyers and phone calls with false and/or intimidating information, to suppress voter participation. A number of groups, such as the Department of Justice, ~~the~~ EAC, and organizations such as the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, keep phone logs regarding complaints of such practices. These logs should be reviewed and analyzed to see how and where such practices are being conducted and what can be done about them.

*the*  
***Recommendation 15: Study Use of HAVA Administrative Complaint Procedure as Vehicle for Measuring Fraud and Intimidation***

EAC should study the extent to which states are utilizing the administrative complaint procedure mandated by HAVA. In addition, ~~the~~ EAC should study whether data collected through the administrative complaint procedure can be used as another source of information for measuring fraud and intimidation.

***Recommendation 16: Examine the Use of Special Election Courts***

*be* Given that many state and local judges are elected, it may be worth exploring whether special election courts should be established to handle fraud and intimidation complaints before, during, and after Election Day. Pennsylvania employs such a system and could investigate how well that system is working.



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### **Accepted Recommendations**

There has never been a comprehensive, national study that gathered data regarding all claims, charges, and prosecutions of voting crimes. EAC feels that a comprehensive study is the most important research that it can offer the election community and the public. As such, EAC has adopted all or a part of six of the 16 recommendations made by EAC consultants and the working group.

While several of the other recommendations could be used to obtain more anecdotal information regarding election crimes, EAC believes that what is needed is a comprehensive survey and study of the information available from investigatory agencies, prosecutorial bodies and courts on the number and types of complaints, charges and prosecutions of election crimes. Additional media reviews, additional interviews and the use of observers to collect information from voters on Election Day will only serve to continue the use of anecdotal data to report on election crimes. Hard data on complaints, charges and prosecutions exists and we should gather and use that data, rather than rely on the perceptions of the media or the members of the public as to what might be fraud or intimidation.

Some of the recommendations are beyond the scope of the current study. While election courts may be a reasonable conclusion to reach after we determine the volume and type of election crimes being reported, charged or prosecuted, it is premature to embark on an analysis of that solution without more information. Last, some of the recommendations do not support a comprehensive study of election crimes. While a risk analysis might be appropriate in a smaller scale study, EAC desires to conduct a broader survey to avoid the existing problem of anecdotal and limited scope of information.

In order to further its goal of developing a comprehensive data set regarding election crimes and the laws and procedures used to identify and prosecute them, EAC intends to engage in the following research activities in studying the existence and enforcement of election crimes:

#### ***Survey Chief Election Officers Regarding Administrative Complaints***

The Likely sources of complaints concerning election crimes are the administrative complaint processes that states were required to establish to comply with Section 402 of HAVA. These complaint procedures were required to be in place prior to a state receiving any funds under HAVA. Citizens are permitted to file complaints alleging violations of HAVA Title III provisions under these procedures with the state's chief election official. Those complaints must be resolved within 60 days. The procedures also allow for alternative dispute resolution of claims. Some states have expanded this process to include complaints of other violations, such as election crimes.



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In order to determine how many of these complaints allege the commission of election crimes, EAC will survey the states' chief election officers regarding complaints that have been filed, investigated, and resolved since January 1, 2004. EAC will use the definition of election crimes provided above in this report in its survey so that data regarding a uniform set of offenses will be collected.

***Survey State Election Crime Investigation Units Regarding Complaints Filed and Referred***

Several chief state election officials have developed investigation units focused on receiving, investigating, and referring complaints of election crimes. These units were established to bolster the abilities of state and local law enforcement to investigate allegations of election crimes. California, New York and Florida are just three examples of states that have these types of units.

EAC will use a survey instrument to gather information on the numbers and types of complaints that have been received by, investigated, and ultimately referred to local or state law enforcement by election crime investigation units since January 1, 2004. These ~~data will help us~~ understand the pervasiveness of perceived fraud, as well as the number of claims that state election officials felt were meritorious of being referred to local and state law enforcement or prosecutorial agencies for further action.

***Survey Law Enforcement and Prosecutorial Agencies Regarding Complaints and Charge of Voting Crimes***

While voters, candidates and citizens may call national hotlines or the news media to report allegations of election crimes, it is those complaints that are made to law enforcement that can be investigated and ultimately prosecuted. Thus, it is critical to the study of election crimes to obtain statistics regarding the number and types of complaints that are made to law enforcement, how many of those complaints result in the perpetrator being charged or indicted, and how many of those charges or indictments result in pleas or convictions.

Thus, EAC will survey law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies at the local, state and federal level to determine the number and types of complaints, charges or indictments, and pleas or convictions of election crimes since January 1, 2004. In addition, EAC will seek to obtain an understanding of why some complaints are not charged or indicted and why some charges or indictments are not prosecuted.



December 2006

### *Analyze Survey Data in Light of State Laws and Procedures*

Once a reliable <sup>2m</sup> data set concerning the existence and enforcement of election crimes is assembled, a real analysis of the effectiveness of fraud prevention measures can be conducted. For example, data can be analyzed to determine if criminal activities related to elections are isolated to certain areas or regions of the country. Data collected from the election official surveys can be compared to the data regarding complaints, charges and prosecutions gathered from the respective law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies in each jurisdiction. The effect and/or effectiveness of provisions such as voter identification laws and challenger provisions can be assessed based on hard data from areas where these laws exist. Last, analyses such as the effectiveness of enforcement can be conducted in light of the resources available to the effort.

### CONCLUSION <sup>for the</sup>

Election crimes are nothing new to our election process. The pervasiveness of these crimes and the fervor with which they have been enforced has created a great deal of debate among academics, election officials, and voters. Past studies of these issues have been limited in scope and some have been riddled with bias. These are issues that deserve comprehensive and nonpartisan review. EAC, through its clearinghouse role, will collect and analyze data on election crimes throughout the country. These data not only will tell us what types of election crimes are committed and where fraud exists, but also inform us of what factors impact the existence, prevention, and prosecution of election crimes.



**APPENDIX 1 – BIOGRAPHIES OF JOB SEREBROV AND TOVA WANG**

Available on EAC Website, [www.eac.gov](http://www.eac.gov).

**APPENDIX 2 – SUMMARIES OF BOOKS, REPORTS AND ARTICLES**

Available on EAC Website, [www.eac.gov](http://www.eac.gov).

**APPENDIX 3 – SUMMARIES OF INTERVIEWS**

Available on EAC Website, [www.eac.gov](http://www.eac.gov).

**APPENDIX 4 – SUMMARIES OF CASES REVIEWED**

Available on EAC Website, [www.eac.gov](http://www.eac.gov).

Margaret Sims /EAC/GOV  
11/13/2006 10:27 AM

To Juliet E. Hodgkins/EAC/GOV@EAC  
cc  
bcc  
Subject VF-VI Another DOJ Objection

Julie:

I just remembered that there was one other DOJ objection. It was about the way the consultants described the Election Crimes Branch focus on cases. In the interview with Donsanto (the only interview I attended), he made reference to the fact that the Election Crimes Branch used to only go after conspiracies, not individuals. Now, however, they had begun prosecuting individuals for noncitizen and felon voting. The consultants heard an unexpressed "instead", which would mean that DOJ had dropped pursuing conspiracies in favor of going after individuals. Based on my previous experience, I heard and unexpressed "in addition", meaning that DOJ was not just prosecuting conspiracies, the department also had begun to prosecute individuals.

I had lengthy discussions with the consultants over this issue as well. Donsanto confirmed that he meant "in addition", and the lists of cases he provided indicates that the department continues to pursue conspiracies. (It doesn't make sense any other way, unless you believe that the government is out to get the little guy.) --- Peggy

007152

# EAC SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW FOR VOTING FRAUD-VOTER INTIMIDATION RESEARCH

Deliberative Process  
Privilege

## Articles

People for the American Way and the NAACP, "The Long Shadow of Jim Crow," December 6, 2004.

This report describes the pervasive and repeated practices of voter intimidation and vote suppression that have taken place in very recent years and during contemporary American history. It goes on to describe the numerous instances of voter intimidation and suppression during the 2000 election, the 1990s, the 1980s and back through the civil rights movement of the 1960s, putting current efforts in historical perspective. Describing the chronology of events in this way demonstrates the developing patterns and strategic underpinnings of the tactics used over the last forty years. Examples include:

- Florida law enforcement questioned elderly African American voters in Orlando regarding the 2003 mayoral race, which had already been resolved, shortly before the 2004 election;
- the 2004 Florida felon purge list;
- the case of South Dakota in 2004 in which Native Americans were improperly and illegally required to show photo identification at the polls or denied the right to vote, and similar improper demands for ID from minorities in other parts of the country;
- the use of challengers in minority districts in many locations;
- the challenge to the right of African American students to vote in Texas in 2004;
- the presence of men looking like law enforcement challenging African American voters at the polls in Philadelphia in 2003;
- the distribution of flyers in Louisiana and elsewhere in a number of elections over the last few years in minority areas telling them to vote on the wrong day; and
- the FBI investigation into thousands of Native American voters in South Dakota in 2002.

Laughlin McDonald, "The New Poll Tax," *The American Prospect* vol. 13 no. 23, December 30, 2002.

Argues that "the discriminatory use of so-called 'ballot security' programs" has been a reoccurring scandal since the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. These programs are deceptively presented as preventing voter fraud and thereby furthering good government. However, McDonald states "but far too often they [the ballot security programs] are actually designed to suppress minority voting -- and for nakedly partisan purposes." Blames the federal government as well as the states for use of suspect ballot security programs. McDonald cites several ballot security efforts that were really disguised attempts at minority voter suppression:

- SD-DOJ "voting integrity initiative".
- AR - poll watchers driving away voters in predominantly black precincts by taking photos of them and demanding identification during pre-election day balloting.
- MI - "spotters" at heavily Democratic precincts was an effort to intimidate black voters and suppress Democratic turnout
- SC - one county's officials instituted a new and unauthorized policy allowing them to challenge voters who gave rural route or box numbers for their registration address (disproportionately affecting African Americans).
- the 1981 gubernatorial election anti-fraud initiative leading to the well known consent decree prohibiting the Republicans from repeating this, a similar Republican effort in Louisiana in 1986 in Senator John Breaux's race which again resulted in prohibition by a state court judge, and a similar effort by Republicans in Senator Jesse Helms 1990 reelection.

States that HAVA "contains provisions that may enhance the opportunities for harassment and intimidation of minorities through ballot-security

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**programs** (especially voter ID). Indicates that the crux of the problem is **lax enforcement of federal voters rights laws** ("there is no record of the purveyors of any ballot-security program being criminally prosecuted by federal authorities for interfering with the right to vote." The only positive case law McDonald cited was a decision by the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit that affirmed "an award of damages ranging from \$500 to \$2,000, payable by individual poll officials to each of seven black voters who had been unlawfully challenged, harassed, denied assistance in voting or purged from the rolls in the town of Crawfordsville [Arkansas].")  
Recommends that Congress and the states should adopt "nondiscriminatory, evenly applied measures to ensure the integrity of the ballot."

### Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau, "An Evaluation: Voter Registration Elections Board" Report 05-12, September, 2005.

Current voter registration practices were determined to be insufficient to ensure the accuracy of voter registration lists used by poll workers or to prevent ineligible persons from registering to vote. **In six municipalities where sufficient information was available, there was 105 instances of potentially improper or fraudulent voting in the 2004 elections. These included: 98 ineligible felons who may have voted; 2 individuals who may have voted twice; 1 voter who may have been underage; and 4 absentee ballots that should not have been counted because the voters who cast them died before Election Day** (all but dead voters were forwarded to appropriate district attorneys for investigation). Statutes require that clerks send cards to everyone who registers by mail or on Election Day. However, only 42.7 % of the 150 municipalities surveyed sent cards to both groups, and 46 % did not send any address verification cards to those registering to vote on Election Day in November 2004. Statutes also require clerks to provide the local district attorney with the names of any Election Day registrants whose cards are undeliverable at the address provided. However, only 24.3 % of the clerks who sent cards also forwarded names from undeliverable cards to district attorneys. District attorneys surveyed indicated that they require more information than is typically provided to conduct effective investigations. To ensure that voter registration lists contain only the names of qualified electors, municipal clerks are required by statute to remove or inactivate the names of individuals who have not voted in four years, to update registration information for individuals who move or change their names, and to remove or inactivate the names of deceased individuals. They are also required to notify registered voters before removing their names from registration lists. These statutory requirements are not consistently followed:

- 85.3 % of municipalities removed the names of inactive voters from their voter registration lists;
- 71.4 % sometimes or always notified registered voters before removing their names; and
- 54.0 % reported removing the names of ineligible felons.
- registration lists contain duplicate records and the names of ineligible individuals (e.g.; more than 348,000 electronic voter registration records from eight municipalities were reviewed, identifying 3,116 records that appear to show individuals who are registered more than once in the same municipality).

#### Recommendations:

- adjust the early registration deadline to provide clerks more time to prepare registration lists;
- establish more stringent requirements for special registration deputies, including prohibiting compensation based on the number of individuals registered;
- establish uniform requirements for demonstrating proof of residence for all registrants;
- provide municipal clerks with more flexibility in the use of address verification cards;
- Authorize civil penalties for local election officials and municipalities that fail to comply with election laws; and
- implement mandatory elections training requirements for municipal clerks.

Report also recognized that the new **HAVA registration procedures would help with existing registration problems.**

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Milwaukee Police Department, Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office, Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Attorney's Office "Preliminary Findings of Joint Task Force Investigating Possible Election Fraud," May 10, 2005.

On January 26, 2005, the Milwaukee Police Department, Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the United States Attorney's Office formed a task force to investigate alleged voting irregularities during the November 2004 elections. The task force has made the following specific determinations based on evidence examined to date:

- evidence of more than 100 individual instances of suspected double-voting, voting in names of persons who likely did not vote, and/or voting in names believed to be fake.
- more than 200 felons voted when they were not eligible to do so. (In order to establish criminal cases, the government must establish willful violations in individual instances);
- persons who had been paid to register voters as "deputy registrars" falsely listed approximately 65 names in order to receive compensation for the registrations. (The evidence does not indicate that these particular false registrations were later used to cast votes); and,
- the number of votes counted from the City of Milwaukee exceeds the number of persons recorded as voting by more than 4,500. (Evidence indicates widespread record keeping errors with respect to recording the number of voters)

The investigation concentrated on the 70,000+ same-day registrations. It found that a large majority of the reported errors were the result of data entry errors, such as street address numbers being transposed. However, the investigation also found more than 100 instances where votes were cast in a manner suggesting fraud. These include:

- persons with the same name and date of birth recorded as voting more than once;
- persons who live outside Milwaukee, but who used non-existent City addresses to register and vote in the City (141 of them were same day registrants; in several instances, the voter explicitly listed municipality names other than Milwaukee on the registration cards);
- persons who registered and voted with identities and addresses that cannot in any way be linked to a real person;
- persons listed as voting under a name and identity of a person known to be deceased;
- persons whose identities were used to vote, but who in subsequent interviews told task force investigators that they did not, in fact, vote in the City of Milwaukee.

Investigation also found:

- persons who were paid money to obtain registrations allegedly falsified approximately 65 names on registration forms, allegedly to obtain more money for each name submitted.
- more than 200 felons who were not eligible to vote in the 2004 election, but who are recorded as having done so.
- same-day registrations were accepted in which the card had incomplete information that would help establish identity. For example: 48 original cards for persons listed as voting had no name; 548 had no address; 28 did not have signatures; and another 23 cards had illegible information (part of approximately 1,300 same-day registrations for which votes were cast, but which election officials could not authenticate as proper voters within the City).
- the post-election misfiling or loss of original green registration cards that were considered duplicates, but that in fact corresponded to additional votes. These cards were used to record votes, but approximately 100 cards of interest to investigators can no longer be located. In addition, other original green registration cards continue to be found.

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National Commission on Federal Election Reform, "Building Confidence in U.S. Elections," Center for Democracy and Election Management, American University, September 2005.

Among the observations made that are relevant to the EAC study of fraud and intimidation are the following:

- The November 2004 elections showed that irregularities and fraud still occur.
- Failure to provide voters with such basic information as their registration status and their polling site location raises a barrier to voting as significant as inconsistent procedures on provisional ballots or voter ID requirements.
- **There is no evidence of extensive fraud in U.S. elections or of multiple voting, but both occur, and it could affect the outcome of a close election.**
- The Commission is concerned that the different approaches to identification cards might prove to be a serious impediment to voting.
- **Voter registration lists are often inflated by the inclusion of citizens who have moved out of state but remain on the lists.** Moreover, under the National Voter Registration Act, names are often added to the list, but counties and municipalities often do not delete the names of those who moved. Inflated voter lists are also caused by phony registrations and efforts to register individuals who are ineligible. At the same time, inaccurate purges of voter lists have removed citizens who are eligible and are properly registered.
- Political party and nonpartisan voter registration drives generally contribute to the electoral process by generating interest in upcoming elections and expanding participation. However, they are occasionally abused. **There were reports in 2004 that some party activists failed to deliver voter registration forms of citizens who expressed a preference for the opposing party.**
- **Vote by mail raises concerns about privacy**, as citizens voting at home may come under pressure to vote for certain candidates, and it increases the risk of fraud.
- **While election fraud is difficult to measure, it occurs.** The U.S. Department of Justice has launched more than 180 investigations into election fraud since October 2002. These investigations have resulted in **charges for multiple voting, providing false information on their felon status, and other offenses** against 89 individuals and in convictions of 52 individuals. The convictions related to a **variety of election fraud offenses, from vote buying to submitting false voter registration information and voting-related offenses by non-citizens.** In addition to the federal investigations, state attorneys general and local prosecutors handle cases of election fraud. Other cases are never pursued because of the difficulty in obtaining sufficient evidence for prosecution or because of the low priority given to election fraud cases.
- **Absentee ballots remain the largest source of potential voter fraud**
- **Non-citizens have registered to vote in several recent elections**
- **The growth of "third-party" (unofficial) voter registration drives in recent elections has led to a rise in reports of voter registration fraud.**
- **Many states allow the representatives of candidates or political parties to challenge a person's eligibility to register or vote or to challenge an inaccurate name on a voter roll. This practice of challenges may contribute to ballot integrity, but it can have the effect of intimidating eligible voters, preventing them from casting their ballot, or otherwise disrupting the voting process.**

Its pertinent recommendations for reform are as follows:

- **Interoperable state voter databases** are needed to facilitate updates in the registration of voters who move to another state and to eliminate duplicate registrations, which are a source of potential fraud.
- **Voters should be informed of their right to cast a provisional ballot** if their name does not appear on the voter roll, or if an election official asserts that the individual is not eligible to vote, but **States should take additional and effective steps to inform voters as to the location of their precinct**
- The Commission recommends that states use "REAL ID" cards for voting purposes.
- **To verify the identity of voters who cast absentee ballots, the voter's signature on the absentee ballot can be matched with a digitized**

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**version of the signature that the election administrator maintains.** While such signature matches are usually done, they should be done consistently in all cases, so that election officials can verify the identity of every new registrant who casts an absentee ballot.

- **Each state needs to audit its voter registration files** to determine the extent to which they are accurate (with correct and current information on individuals), complete (including all eligible voters), valid (excluding ineligible voters), and secure (with protections against unauthorized use). This can be done by matching voter files with records in other state agency databases in a regular and timely manner, contacting individuals when the matches are inconclusive, and conducting survey research to estimate the number of voters who believe they are registered but who are not in fact listed in the voter files.
- **Each state should oversee political party and nonpartisan voter registration drives** to ensure that they operate effectively, that registration forms are delivered promptly to election officials, that all completed registration forms are delivered to the election officials, and that none are "culled" and omitted according to the registrant's partisan affiliation. Measures should also be adopted to track and hold accountable those who are engaged in submitting fraudulent voter registrations. Such oversight might consist of training activists who conduct voter registration drives and tracking voter registration forms to make sure they are all accounted for. In addition, states should apply a criminal penalty to any activist who deliberately fails to deliver a completed voter registration form.
- **Investigation and prosecution of election fraud should include those acts committed by individuals, including election officials, poll workers, volunteers, challengers or other nonvoters associated with the administration of elections, and not just fraud by voters.**
- **In July of even-numbered years, the U.S. Department of Justice should issue a public report on its investigations of election fraud.** This report should specify the numbers of allegations made, matters investigated, cases prosecuted, and individuals convicted for various crimes. **Each state's attorney general and each local prosecutor should issue a similar report.**
- **The U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Public Integrity should increase its staff to investigate and prosecute election-related fraud.**
- **In addition to the penalties set by the Voting Rights Act, it should be a federal felony for any individual, group of individuals, or organization to engage in any act of violence, property destruction (of more than \$500 value), or threatened act of violence that is intended to deny any individual his or her lawful right to vote or to participate in a federal election.**
- **To deter systemic efforts to deceive or intimidate voters, the Commission recommends federal legislation to prohibit any individual or group from deliberately providing the public with incorrect information about election procedures for the purpose of preventing voters from going to the polls.**
- **States should define clear procedures for challenges, which should mainly be raised and resolved before the deadline for voter registration.** After that, challengers will need to defend their late actions. **On Election Day, they should direct their concerns to poll workers, not to voters directly, and should in no way interfere with the smooth operation of the polling station.**
- **State and local jurisdictions should prohibit a person from handling absentee ballots other than the voter, an acknowledged family member, the U.S. Postal Service or other legitimate shipper, or election officials.** The practice in some states of allowing candidates or party workers to pick up and deliver absentee ballots should be eliminated.
- **All states should consider passing legislation that attempts to minimize the fraud that has resulted from "payment by the piece" to anyone in exchange for their efforts in voter registration, absentee ballot, or signature collection.**
- **Nonpartisan structures of election administration are very important, and election administrators should be neutral, professional, and impartial.**
- **No matter what institutions are responsible for conducting elections, conflict-of-interest standards should be introduced for all federal, state, and local election officials.** Election officials should be prohibited by federal and/or state laws from serving on any political campaign committee, making any public comments in support of a candidate, taking a public position on any ballot measure, soliciting campaign funds, or otherwise campaigning for or against a candidate for public office. A decision by a secretary of state to serve as co-chair of his or her party's presidential

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election committee would clearly violate these standards.

The Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law and Spencer Overton, Commissioner and Law Professor at George Washington University School of Law "Response to the Report of the 2005 Commission on Federal Election Reform," September 19, 2005.

### Recommendation on Voter Identification -

- Report premises its burdensome identification proposals on the need to ensure ballot integrity and on the existence of or potential for widespread fraud. However, the **Report admits that there is simply "no evidence" that the type of fraud that could be solved by stricter voter identification** – individual voters who misrepresent their identity at the polls – is a widespread problem.
- The photo ID proposal guards against only one type of fraud: individuals arriving at the polls to vote using false information, such as the name of another registered voter, or a recent but not current address. Since the costs of this form of fraud are extremely high (federal law provides for up to five years' imprisonment), and the benefits to any individual voter are extremely low, it is highly unlikely that this will ever occur with any frequency. **The limited types of fraud that could be prevented by a Real ID requirement are extremely rare and difficult.**
- In the most comprehensive survey of alleged election fraud to date, Professor Loraine Minnite and David Callahan have shown that the **incidence of individual voter fraud at the polls is negligible**. A few prominent examples support their findings. In Ohio, a statewide survey found four instances of ineligible persons voting or attempting to vote in 2002 and 2004, out of 9,078,728 votes cast – a rate of 0.00004%. Earlier this year, Georgia Secretary of State Cathy Cox stated that she could not recall one documented case of voter fraud relating to the impersonation of a registered voter at the polls during her ten-year tenure as Secretary of State or Assistant Secretary of State.
- The Report attempts to support its burdensome identification requirements on four specific examples of purported fraud or potential fraud. **None of the Report's cited examples of fraud stand up under closer scrutiny.** This response report goes through each instance of fraud raised by the Commission report and demonstrates that in each case the allegation in fact turned out later not to be true or the fraud cited was not of the type that would be addressed by a photo identification requirement.
- The Report fails to provide a good reason to create greater hurdles for voters who vote at the polls than for those who vote absentee. Despite the fact that **absentee ballots are more susceptible to fraud than regular ballots**, the Report exempts absentee voters from its proposed Real ID and proof of citizenship requirements.

### Other points in ID requirement:

- **Report does not explain why the goals of improved election integrity will not be met through the existing provisions in the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA).**
- Report fails to consider alternative measures to advance its goals that are less restrictive to voters. To the extent that any limited fraud by **individuals at the polls does trickle into the system, it can be addressed by far less restrictive alternatives.** The first step is to recognize that only voters who appear on the registration list may vote a regular ballot. Proper cleaning of registration lists – and proper use of the lists at the poll – will therefore go a long way toward ensuring that every single ballot is cast by an eligible voter.
- In addition to the **better registration lists that full implementation will provide, better record keeping and administration at the polls will reduce the limited potential for voting by ineligible persons.** In the unlikely event that implementation of current law is not able to wipe out whatever potential for individual fraud remains, there are several effective and less burdensome alternatives to the Report's Real ID recommendation that received wholly insufficient consideration.
- Costs - If required as a precondition for voting, photo identification would operate as a de facto poll tax that could disenfranchise low-income voters. To alleviate this burden, the Report appropriately recommends that the "Real ID" card itself be issued free of charge. Nevertheless, the

## EAC SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW FOR VOTING FRAUD-VOTER INTIMIDATION RESEARCH

percentage of Americans without the documentary proof of citizenship necessary to obtain Real IDs is likely to remain high because the requisite documents are both expensive and burdensome to obtain. (Each of the documents an individual is required to show in order to obtain a "Real ID" card or other government-issued photo ID card costs money or presumes a minimal level of economic resources. Unless the federal and all state governments waive the cost of each of these other forms of identification, the indirect costs of photo IDs will be even greater than their direct costs. In addition, since government-issued IDs may only be obtained at specified government offices, which may be far from voters' residences and workplaces, individuals seeking such IDs will have to incur transportation costs and the costs of taking time off from work to visit those offices during often-abbreviated business hours.)

- Since voting generally depends on the voter's address, and since many states will not accept IDs that do not bear an individual's current voting address, an additional 41.5 million Americans each year will have ID that they may not be able to use to vote.
- The burden would fall disproportionately on the elderly, the disabled, students, the poor, and people of color.
- The ID recommendations reduce the benefits of voter registration at disability and other social service agencies provided by the National Voter Registration Act of 1993. Individuals who seek to register at those offices—which generally do not issue IDs Census data demonstrate that African Americans and Latinos are more than three times more likely than whites to register to vote at a public assistance agency, and that whites are more likely than African Americans and Latinos to register when seeking a driver's license. Accordingly, the voter registration procedure far more likely to be used by minorities than by whites will no longer provide Americans with full eligibility to vote.
- The Report's proposal to use Real ID as a condition of voting is so excessive that it would prevent eligible voters from proving their identity with even a valid U.S. passport or a U.S. military photo ID card. The Report's proposal to use Real ID as a condition of voting is so excessive that it would prevent eligible voters from proving their identity with even a valid U.S. passport or a U.S. military photo ID card

**Recommendation on Database Information Sharing Across States -serious efficacy, privacy, and security concerns raised by a nationally distributed database of the magnitude it contemplates.** These problems are exacerbated by the Report's recommendation that an individual's Social Security number be used as the broadly disseminated unique voting identifier.

**Recommendation on Voting Rights of Ex-Felons - This recommendation would set a standard more generous than the policies of the most regressive thirteen states in the nation but more restrictive than the remaining thirty-seven. The trend in the states is toward extension of the franchise.**

Chandler Davidson, Tanya Dunlap, Gale Kenny, and Benjamin Wise, "Republican Ballot Security Programs: Vote Protection or Minority Vote Suppression – or Both?" A Report to the Center for Voting Rights & Protection, September, 2004.

Focuses on **vote suppression through "ballot security programs"** (programs that, in the name of protecting against vote fraud, almost exclusively target heavily black, Latino, or Indian voting precincts and have the intent or effect of discouraging or preventing voters in those precincts from casting a ballot). **Noteworthy characteristics of these programs:**

- **focus on minority precincts almost exclusively**
- **is often on only the flimsiest evidence that vote fraud is likely to be perpetrated in such precincts;**
- **in addition to encouraging the presence of sometimes intimidating white Republican poll watchers or challengers who may slow down voting lines and embarrass potential voters by asking them humiliating questions, these programs have sometimes posted people in official-looking uniforms with badges and side arms who question voters about their citizenship or their registration**
- **warning signs may be posted near the polls, or radio ads may be targeted to minority listeners containing dire threats of prison terms for people who are not properly registered—messages that seem designed to put minority voters on the defensive.**
- **sometimes false information about voting qualifications is sent to minority voters through the mail."**
- **doing mailings, collecting returned materials, and using that as a basis for creating challenger lists and challenging voters at the polls,**

## EAC SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW FOR VOTING FRAUD-VOTER INTIMIDATION RESEARCH

started in the 1950s and continues to today (problem with this practice is that reasons for a mailing to be returned include a wrong address, out of date or inaccurate addresses, poor mail delivery in minority areas, and matching mistakes)

Provide numerous examples from the last 50 years to demonstrate his thesis, going through the historical development of Republican ballot security programs from the 1950s through to the present (including more recent incidents, such as 1981 in New Jersey, 1982 Dallas, Louisiana 1986, Houston 1986, Hidalgo 1988 Orange County 1988, North Carolina 1990, South Carolina 1980-1990, and South Dakota 2002). Author cites and quotes internal Republican letters and memoranda, primary sources and original documents, media reports, scholarly works, as well as the words of judges' rulings in some of the cases that ended up in litigation to prove his argument. author cites and quotes internal Republican letters and memoranda, primary sources and original documents, media reports, scholarly works, as well as the words of judges' rulings in some of the cases that ended up in litigation to prove his argument.

**Some of the features of vote suppression efforts put forth by Republicans under the guise of ballot security programs:**

1. **An organized, often widely publicized effort to field poll watchers in what Republicans call "heavily Democratic," but what are usually minority, precincts;**
2. **Stated concerns about vote fraud in these precincts, which are occasionally justified but often are not;**
3. **Misinformation and fear campaigns directed at these same precincts, spread by radio, posted signs in the neighborhoods, newspapers, fliers, and phone calls, which are often anonymously perpetrated;**
4. **Posting "official-looking" personnel at polling places, including but not limited to off-duty police—sometimes in uniform, sometimes armed;**
5. **Aggressive face-to-face challenging techniques at the polls that can confuse, humiliate, and intimidate—as well as slow the voting process—in these same minority precincts;**
6. **Challenging voters using inaccurate, unofficial lists of registrants derived from "do-not-forward" letters sent to low-income and minority neighborhoods;**
7. **Photographing, tape recording, or videotaping voters; and**
8. **Employing language and metaphors that trade on stereotypes of minority voters as venal and credulous.**

The report ends with some observations on the state of research on the incidence of fraud, which the author finds lacking. He suggests that **vote suppression of qualified minority voters by officials and partisan poll-watchers, challengers, and uniformed guards should also be considered as included in any definition of election fraud.** Recommends Democrats should not protest all programs aimed at ballot integrity, but rather work with Republicans to find solutions to problems that confront both parties and the system as a whole.

Alec Ewald, "A Crazy Quilt of Tiny Pieces: State and Local Administration of American Criminal Disenfranchisement Law," The Sentencing Project, November 2005.

Presents results from the first nationwide study to document the implementation of American felony disenfranchisement law. Data came from two main sources: a 33-state survey of state elections officials (spring 2004) and telephone interviews with almost one hundred city, county, town, and parish officials drawn from 10 selected states.

### Major Conclusions:

1. **Broad variation and misunderstanding in interpretation and enforcement of voting laws** (more than one-third [37%] of local officials interviewed in ten states either described their state's fundamental eligibility law incorrectly, or stated that they did not know a central aspect of that law. / Local registrars differ in their knowledge of basic eligibility law, often within the same state. Differences also emerge in how they are notified of criminal convictions, what process they use to suspend, cancel, or "purge" voters from the rolls, whether particular documents are required to restore a voter to eligibility, and whether they have information about the criminal background of new arrivals to the state.)
2. **Misdemeanants disenfranchised in at least five states** (the commonly-used term "felon disenfranchisement" is not entirely accurate, since at

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least five states – Colorado, Illinois, Michigan, South Carolina, and Maryland – also formally bar some or all people convicted of misdemeanors from voting [it is likely that misdemeanants in other states who do retain the formal right to vote could have difficulty exercising that right, given ignorance of their eligibility and the lack of clear rules and procedures for absentee voting by people in jail who have not been convicted of a felony / Maryland excludes persons convicted of many misdemeanors, such as “Unlawful operation of vending machines,” “Misrepresentation of tobacco leaf weight,” and “Racing horse under false name.”]

3. **Significant ambiguities in voting laws (disenfranchisement in Tennessee is dependent on which of five different time periods a felony conviction occurred between 1973 and the present /** in Oregon, disenfranchisement is determined not by conviction or imprisonment for a felony, but for being placed under Department of Corrections supervision / since 1997, some persons convicted of a felony and sentenced to less than 12 months' custody have been sent to county jails and hence, are eligible to vote.
4. **Disenfranchisement results in contradictory policies within states (the “crazy-quilt” pattern of disenfranchisement laws exists even within states /** Alabama and Mississippi have both the most and least restrictive laws in the country, a result which is brought about by the fact that certain felonies result in the loss of voting rights for life, while others at least theoretically permit people in prison to vote / most felonies in Alabama result in permanent disenfranchisement, but drug and DUI offenses have been determined to not involve the “moral turpitude” that triggers the loss of voting rights / in Mississippi, ten felonies result in disenfranchisement, but do not include such common offenses as burglary and drug crimes.
5. **Confusing policies lead to the exclusion of legal voters and the inclusion of illegal voters:** The complexity of state disenfranchisement policies results in frequent misidentification of voter eligibility, largely because officials differ in their knowledge and application of disqualification and restoration law and procedures.
6. **Significant variation and uncertainty in how states respond to persons with a felony conviction from other states:** No state has a systematic mechanism in place to address the immigration of persons with a felony conviction, and there is no consensus among indefinite-disenfranchisement states on whether the disqualification is properly confined to the state of conviction, or should be considered in the new state of residence. Interpretation and enforcement of this part of disenfranchisement law varies not only across state lines, but also from one county to another within states. Local officials have no way of knowing about convictions in other states, and many are unsure what they would do if a would-be voter acknowledged an old conviction. Because there is no prospect of a national voter roll, this situation will continue even after full HAVA implementation.
7. **Disenfranchisement is a time-consuming, expensive practice:** Enforcement requires elections officials to gather records from different agencies and bureaucracies, including state and federal courts, Departments of Corrections, Probation and Parole, the state Board of Elections, the state police, and other counties' elections offices.

### Policy Implications

1. **Policies disenfranchising people living in the community on probation or parole, or who have completed a sentence are particularly difficult to enforce:** States which disenfranchise only persons who are currently incarcerated appear able to enforce their laws more consistently than those barring non-incarcerated citizens from voting.
2. **Given large-scale misunderstanding of disenfranchisement law, many eligible persons incorrectly believe they cannot vote, or have been misinformed by election officials:** More than one-third of election officials interviewed incorrectly described their state's law on voting eligibility. More than 85% of the officials who misidentified their state's law either did not know the eligibility standard or specified that the law was more restrictive than was actually the case.
3. **Occasional violation of disenfranchisement law by non-incarcerated voters not surprising:** Given the complexity of state laws and the number of state officials who lack an understanding of restoration and disqualification procedures, it should come as no surprise that many voters are ignorant of their voting status, a fact that is likely to have resulted in hundreds of persons with a felony conviction registering and voting illegally in recent years.

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4. Taken together, these findings undermine the most prominent rationale for disenfranchisement: that the policy reflects a strong, clear consensus that persons with a felony conviction are unfit to vote and constitute a threat to the polity: First, when significant numbers of the people who administer elections do not know important aspects of disenfranchisement law, it is hard to conclude that the restriction is necessary to protect social order and the "purity" of the ballot box. Second, because they are all but invisible in the sentencing process, "collateral" sanctions like disenfranchisement simply cannot accomplish the denunciatory, expressive purposes their supporters claim. We now know that disenfranchisement is not entirely "visible" even to the people running American elections. Third, deep uncertainty regarding the voting rights of people with felony convictions who move from one state to another indicates that we do not even know what purpose disenfranchisement is supposed to serve – whether it is meant to be a punishment, or simply a non-penal regulation of the franchise.

### Recommendations

1. **Clarify Policies Regarding Out-of-State Convictions:** State officials should clarify their policies and incorporate into training programs the means by which a felony conviction in another state affects an applicant's voting eligibility. For example, sentence-only disenfranchisement states should clarify that newcomers with old felony convictions from indefinite disenfranchisement states are eligible to vote. And those states which bar some people from voting even after their sentences are completed must clarify whether new arrivals with old felony convictions from sentence-only disenfranchisement states are automatically eligible, and must explain what procedures, if any, should be followed for restoration.
2. **Train Election Officials:** Clarify disenfranchisement policies and procedures for all state and local election officials through development of materials and training programs in each state. At a minimum, this should include distribution of posters, brochures and FAQ sheets to local and state elections offices.
3. **Train Criminal Justice Officials:** Provide training on disqualification and restoration policies for all correctional and criminal justice officials, particularly probation and parole staff. Correctional and criminal justice officials should also be actively engaged in describing these policies to persons under criminal justice supervision.
4. **Review Voting Restrictions on Non-Incarcerated People:** Given the serious practical difficulty of enforcing laws disqualifying people who are not incarcerated from voting – problems which clearly include both excluding eligible people from voting and allowing those who should be ineligible to vote -- state policymakers should review such policies to determine if they serve a useful public purpose.

### American Center for Voting Rights "Vote Fraud, Intimidation and Suppression in the 2004 Presidential Election," August 2, 2005.

Using court records, police reports and news articles, ACVR Legislative Fund presented this Report documenting hundreds of reported incidents and allegations from around the country. The report **most often alleges voter intimidation and voter registration fraud, and to a lesser degree absentee ballot fraud and vote buying**. This report alleges a coordinated effort by members of some organizations to rig the election system through voter registration fraud, the first step in any vote fraud scheme that corrupts the election process by burying local officials in fraudulent and suspicious registration forms. paid Democrat operatives were far more involved in voter intimidation and suppression activities than were their Republican counterparts during the 2004 presidential election. Identified five cities as "hot spots" which require additional immediate attention, based on the findings of this report and the cities' documented history of fraud and intimidation: Philadelphia, PA, Milwaukee, WI, Seattle, WA, St. Louis/East St. Louis, MO/IL, and Cleveland, OH. Refutes charges of voter intimidation and suppression made against Republican supporters, discusses similar charges against Democrats, details incidents vote fraud and illegal voting and finally discusses problems with vote fraud, voter registration fraud and election irregularities around the country. Recommends:

- **Both national political parties should formally adopt a zero-tolerance fraud and intimidation policy that commits the party to pursuing and fully prosecuting individuals and allied organizations who commit vote fraud or who seek to deter any eligible voter from participating in the election through fraud or intimidation.** No amount of legislative reform can effectively deter those who commit acts of fraud if there is no punishment for the crime and these acts continue to be tolerated.